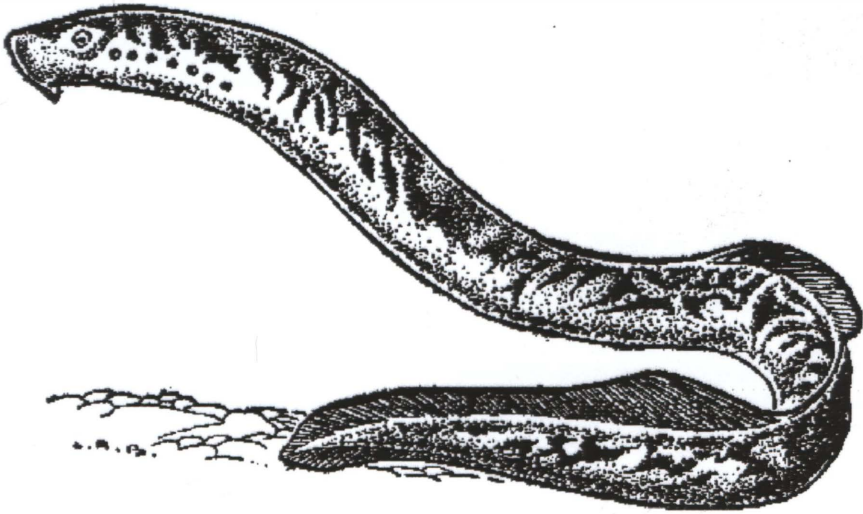


Animals & Men

The Journal of the Centre for Fortean Zoology

The Mysterious Lamprey of Puerto Rico



GUST '98 expedition report; out of place
animals in Kent; mystery sharks; the
wolverine "strikes back"

Issue 18

£2.00

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*"In her abnormalities, nature
 reveals her secrets"*
 (Goethe)

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ANIMALS & MEN

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THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY ARE NOT DONE...

Dear Friends,

Welcome to another issue, and the end of another year. It has been a momentous year for all at The CFZ for a number of reasons, and I am sure that next year will also have its fair share of triumphs and disasters. That is what life, and especially the tiny microcosm of life that is The Centre for Fortean Zoology is all about.

The keen eyed amongst you will notice that the cover of this issue ain't in colour. This is simply because although we now have the facilities to print in colour, there is no real point in doing so unless we have a suitable pic for the front cover. We do not want to use colour printing merely as a gimmick to sell more copies of the magazine. When there is something deserving of being immortalised in colour, believe me, we shall do so.

What would an editorial of this fine publication be without an apology? This ish is no exception. On October 31st our friend and colleague Darren Naish got married. The three core members of the CFZ posse were invited to the ceremony and to the meal afterwards, and we were driving happily towards Southampton when the trusty CFZmobile broke down and we had to be towed home with our figurative tails between our legs.

Although we made our excuses via the telephone we have not, until now, been able to present our apologies in an acceptable form, so here goes:

Darren and Toni. All three of us are greatly sad that we missed your big day, and we all wish you all the best for your life together - a sentiment that I'm sure will be echoed by your many friends and admirers within the fortetan, cryptozoological and palaeontological communities.

On a different note - the 1999 CFZ Yearbook is now complete and will be available in mid January priced £10.75 (including p&p). Those people who have an outstanding order for one of the Doc Shiels books which we were due to publish during 1997 or one of the new books from American publishers that we are no longer able to supply will get a free copy.

For some reason Richard Freeman has an ongoing fascination with depicting my in various cryptozoological poses with my long suffering girlfriend in the role of my hapless victim. Gawd knows why, but this ish I am King Kong and the Divine Ms M is Fay Wray - It seems appropriate somehow...

All things being equal we will have taken delivery of our new laser printer within the next week or so, and although the next issue of A&M will not be until the spring, due to filming commitments, we shall be resuming normal service again as of April.

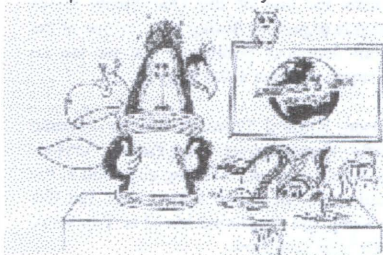
Until then, our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year, from all at the CFZ

Jonathan Downes



NEWSFILE

Compiled and edited by Graham Inglis

REINTRODUCTIONS

SCOTLAND AWAITS THE BEAVER'S RETURN

The prospect of the beaver again being seen on the backwaters of Scotland's rivers increased yesterday with a declaration of support from the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) - a body closely involved in the hefty rodent's successful reintroduction elsewhere in Europe.

Hunted to extinction in the British Isles more than 400 years ago, the beaver has become the favoured candidate of those who want to turn back the wilderness clock in Scotland. However, not everyone is happy with the idea of the beaver's return. Anglers in particular think the dam-building creature could be the last straw for salmon populations already seriously depleted on many rivers.

WWF, in its submission, says there is abundant scientific evidence that the beaver can help improve the conservation value of sites. The otter, water vole, trout and salmon can all benefit from beavers' coppicing of trees, small-scale dam building and grazing of aquatic vegetation. It generally only builds dams when suitable river bank sites have been used up - to keep the water level above the entrance to its lodge home - and even then the dams are only about 12-18in high, and easily jumped by a salmon.

Beavers weigh up to 20kg and each one is estimated to fell two tons of timber a year in its hunt for food - the bark of birches and aspens in winter, and grass, herbs

and shrubs in summer. - *The Independent* - 14 July 1998

ORANG-UTANG RE-RELEASE

Thirty-six orang-utans rescued from devastating forest fires last year have been released back into the wild.

Workers at a primate refuge center said they reintroduced the apes into unburned jungle habitat in East Kalimantan province. The orang-utans were flown in from a refuge, said veterinarian Amir Ma'arif. The apes were brought to the refugee over several months last year after fires forced them to flee their old habitats. About 1.2 million acres of forest were burned by the fires. The number of orang-utans living in Borneo has dwindled from an estimated high of 20,000 to around 2,000 because much of their habitat has been destroyed by development and fires. - *A.P.* 20-9-98

EURO-BISON

European bison could be soon back in the English countryside, 400 years after they died out. Biologists believe the 1,800lb, 6ft high animal could be used to clear scrub and undergrowth, recreating a more 'natural' flora. Unlike its American cousin, a separate species, the European bison tends to browse rather than graze. It is mainly found in the wild in forests on the Poland-Russia border.

Simon Wakefield from Marwell Zoo, near Winchester, Hants, said: 'One problem we do have is that bison are considered dangerous under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act and you can only put them in places where they do not come into contact with the public.' The final decision will rest with local authorities, who are likely to be wary. In Yellowstone, the American national park, bison roam free but tourists who have approached too close have often been gored.

CONSERVATION

TROUSER SNAKES THREATEN AUSSIE WILDLIFE.

Smuggled green pythons intercepted at Cairns airport in May were carrying a new virus that may have had the

potential to devastate Australia's native reptiles, fish and amphibians. The 10 smuggled snakes were being brought into the country hidden in a man's trousers. After two died, scientists isolated a virus from both snakes that belongs to a group of viruses that cause disease in Australian fish and amphibians. 'It's possible that this virus, which hasn't been identified in Australia before, could have seriously affected Australia's valuable aqua culture industry as well as our wildlife,' said Dr Deborah Middleton.

PEREGRINE FALCON

Peregrine falcons, under US federal protection for 8 years, "are back": 1,600 pairs are in the country and may even come off the endangered list. Since the American alligator was the first to be removed from the endangered list in the late 1970s, only six other species have recovered enough to be taken off. Peregrines would be the first recovered species to be removed since the gray whale and Arctic peregrine falcon in 1994. - *St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Sep 1998*

POOL FROG

The pool frogs of Norfolk may be a British species with a lineage back to the Ice Age. It is about the size of a common frog but has bronze colouring on its back and gold or green eyes. Only one specimen, a male, is known to survive and he is under guard at a secret location in Norfolk. Nine closely-related female frogs has been flown from Sweden to Britain in an attempt to save him from being the last of his line - to 'back breed' the offspring to get back to almost pure British stock.

"PROTECTIVE ACTIONS" ROUNDUP:

Oregon coastal coho salmon - to be US-listed as a threatened species.
Texas Prairie Dogs - might be US-listed, to the incredulity of some ranchers.
Turtle eggs: 5 arrests and 26,000 turtle eggs seized in Oaxaca, Mexico.
Koala: U.S. proposes listing, citing habitat destruction as the primary threat to this Australian icon.
Condor - 9 raised in captivity in Idaho will be released in Utah.

Hawaii's bottom fish (red onaga, ehu and opakapaka) population is reportedly on the verge of collapse due to over-fishing.

Panda - Cheng Cheng, 13, has given birth to twins in a Chinese breeding centre. Only 1,000 pandas are believed to be left in the wild.

Brown Bear - Autumn (fall) hunt in Kenai, Alaska was cancelled for 4th year running because too many females were killed in the Spring hunt.

Black Bear: Vermont numbers rise to 3,000 after fall hunting season "adjusted".

TIGER FEET

WWF slams Japanese TV cookery show for cooking tiger meat: Three Japanese entertainment personalities shown dining on the tiger at a restaurant in Shanghai described the meal as delicious and showed no remorse when they learned what they were eating.

ALLIGATORS AND CROCODILES

FLORIDA CROC

A licensed alligator hunter may have broken Florida's record for the largest alligator caught. This gator is close to 14-feet long, and weighs-in at more than 1,000 pounds. On Tuesday, someone turned him in to a licensed processor who plans to make leather goods out of the gator's hide. Alligators may only be harvested during very limited, control led hunts. If someone is lucky enough to win one of 500 annual alligator hunting permits issued through a lottery, and then actually capture an alligator, it has to be turned over to a State-licensed alligator 'processor' who prepares the skins for sale.

Today, alligators are classified as a *threatened* species because of their similarity in appearance to the American Crocodile, an *endangered* species. Prior to their legal protection, alligators were sold in pet stores and souvenirs shops as novelty items. - *A.P. 18 Sep 98*

CROC TAMER DEATH

Thailand's famed crocodile hunter and tamer, Yuen, has died of lung disease at the age of 84. Hundreds of thousands of tourists had witnessed his shows since

he began performing in 1973. He thrust his head inside a crocodile's jaws in each act. - A.P.

NEW YORK SEWER ALLIGATORS ARE ON ENDANGERED ANIMALS LIST!

Florida alligators that wound up in the sewers hereafter being flushed down toilets as babies are dying out, experts say. The large reptiles - which were brought back by vacationers in the 1960's - have been having difficulty reproducing in New York's sewer system, an increasingly hostile environment.

Alligators like to nest in mounds of decaying vegetation exposed to the sun, and this is impossible beneath the city streets, according to zoologists. The sewer gators have also been falling victim to disease. In the wild, their ancestors basked in the sun and this helped control parasites.

Another problem: Rising levels of sewer gas, hydrogen sulphide and volatile industrial chemicals have made survival for second- and third-generation 'gators difficult. 'Alligators and even rats would have difficulty surviving in New York's sewers today,' said a leading herpetologist. 'I very much doubt that there are more than 20 alligators left.' "Weekly World News", 29 Sept. 1998

Following this 'news item', Loren Coleman commented on the Internet: "I see this tabloid is having fun at the expense of facts again. The sewer alligators, which really date from the 1930s, not the 1960s as per this 'article', probably died out long ago. Much enjoyment in seeing this piece of the lore..."

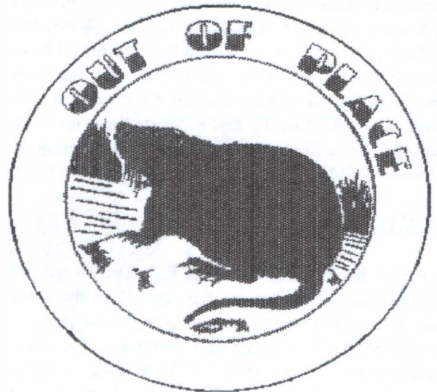
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST..

A San Francisco woman called the Animal Care and Control Center to complain that an iguana was 'staring' at her cat. The officer who responded to the call discovered the lizard was a 3½-foot-long crocodile. Capt. Guldbeck said a man called the Center claiming to be the owner of the 6-year-old crocodile, named Ernest. The man said Ernest disappeared a few weeks ago during moving home. The man refused to give his name and has not collected the animal - because owning a crocodile is illegal, punishable by up to six months in jail.

CROCODILES SURPRISE TOURISTS.

Two stray crocodiles caught bathers by surprise in Guadalajara, a Mexican seaside resort: they crawled out of a river onto a beach and took a swim in the ocean, officials said. About a meter (3 ft) in length, the reptiles sent beachgoers fleeing and provoked a major hunt by authorities. They later returned to the river. - 27 August 1998 Reuters

OUT OF PLACE



MINK STINK

Thousands of mink caused havoc in Finland after they were released from a fur-farm.

No one immediately claimed responsibility, but police believe that animal rights activists were behind the action. 'Many of the freed minks were run over by cars or killed each other because they are predatory animals even though they have lived in captivity,' said Police Chief Inspector Rune Swahn. 'Many will also disturb the wildlife in the forests and many won't survive because they are used to being fed.' - A.P. Sept 9, 1998

RAPA WHELK

Marine scientists have concluded that a type of predator sea snail that was accidentally dumped into the Chesapeake Bay, Virginia, is breeding and is more widespread than expected. The veined rapa whelk,

native to the Sea of Japan, is considered a threat to native shellfish. It has been found at 19 locations. - *USA Today* 23-9-98

EMU RUNS WITH CATTLE

Home, home on the range, where the deer and the emu play. - Emu?

Edward Hastings and his sister were repairing a water tank last week when their cattle plodded into the field with an odd escort - an emu.

The five foot tall (1.5 meter), 100-pound (45 kg) flightless Australian bird ran to them for water. 'It was pretty strange seeing this emu running with our cows,' said Hastings' sister, Roberta Schuchard. 'He was crazy that day.'

Since then the emu has spent its time peacefully eating grass and roaming between Hastings' pasture and a neighbour's. Hastings checks in on the bird daily while harvesting.

Ms.Schuchard said she doesn't know of anyone in the area who own emus or similar-looking ostriches. She called the sheriff's office Friday in hopes of finding the owner. 'It wasn't a nuisance or anything. The cows aren't too upset about it,' she said. 'But if it were my animal, I'd want somebody to turn it in.'

Ted Funiyak, a county animal control officer, planned to capture the emu and take it to a local ostrich farm until someone claims it.

'It's not going anywhere right now,' he said. 'It just wanders right up to you, but whether it'll do that when we grab it will be another story,' he said. - *Montana (USA)* 28-8-98

Other stories on the CFZ website or in the CFZ newsletter:

Rare Mexican Gray Wolf Pup Seen in Arizona - A.P., Phoenix, 18 July 1998
Chicago: new infestation of the Asian long-horned beetle has been found in. 3-8-98
Red fire ant, a bane of agriculture, has been spotted in New Mexico. 4-8-98.

Nematodes (microscopic worms) found in Kentucky water supply, triggering a boil-water alert. 11-9-98

Chipmunks get loose at Hong Kong Airport: one woman scratched. - Sep 98

Stingrays attack 100 beachgoers in Florida after being driven to shore by hurricane - Oct 98

Minnesota (US) and Frankfurt (Germany) on alert for escaped kangaroos - 8-9-98

Hawaii Mobilises Against Brown Tree Snake - an "environmental enemy" - 24-7-98

GREY WOLVES

Biologists who spied a pair of Mexican grey wolves wandering a remote Arizona national forest got a pleasant surprise when they took a closer look. 'They saw two wolves emerge from some trees with a puffball following them,' said Wendy Brown, a wolf recovery biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The puffball was a pup, apparently the first born to gray wolves in the wild to survive for any real length of time in nearly 50 years. 'The parents crossed a creek, but the pup stopped and whined,' Brown said. 'Then the parents coaxed it across.'

The pup, which was spotted in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, is believed to be 9 to 11 weeks old and about 20 pounds. The news came only two days after backers of the wolf reintroduction effort said they had given up hope that any of the pups born this spring had survived.

The last Mexican gray wolf seen in the wild was shot to death near Alpine, Texas, in 1970. They had been all but gone from the area since about 1950, many of them killed by ranchers who saw them as a threat to livestock.

A U.S.-Mexican captive breeding program has brought their numbers to about 175. - (*Associated Press* 18 July 1998)

ATTACKS, EPIDEMICS AND ANOMALOUS DEATHS

SCORPIO RISING

Scorpions are the fourth major cause of death in Iran's southern province of Khuzestan, the daily newspaper Q'oda reported on Saturday. Quoting a report by state veterinary researchers, it said that after respiratory, infectious and digestive diseases, scorpions cause the greatest number of deaths in this humid, oil-rich province. The report did not give any figures on those killed, but said some 25,000 people were treated for scorpion stings in Khuzestan every year, adding that some 60 different varieties of the deadly arachnid could be found in Iran. 'Population growth and urban development have brought the residents in closer contact with scorpions,' the report said. - 8-8-98 *Reuters*

THREE DIE AFTER ATTACK BY RABID BATS IN MEXICO

Rabid bats have prompted a health alert in northern Mexico's scenic Copper Canyon, where three people have died from bat bites and eight others recently were attacked. A 40-year-old Tarahumara Indian man and his two teen-age sons died after a group of bats attacked them while they slept in the village of Batopilas, a popular tourist stop.

The deaths occurred two months ago, but Mexico City health officials couldn't confirm the cause was rabies-induced encephalitis until now, newspapers reported Friday. Bats attacked eight other people last month. - *A.P. Oct 2, 1998*

TOXIC MICROBE

Researchers reported the first scientific evidence of a human health threat from a toxic microbe that has killed millions of fish along the U.S. East Coast, saying it was responsible for a new neurological syndrome.

Maryland researchers blamed the single-cell micro-organism *Pfiesteria piscicida* for problems discovered among 24 people exposed to contaminated water on Chesapeake Bay's Eastern shore last year. The syndrome, though temporary, was marked by several disturbing symptoms including impaired memory, disorientation and learning difficulties.

Operators of so-called factory farms, which raise poultry and other animals, have come under fire from environmentalists who say nitrate-rich runoff from the huge operations has allowed *Pfiesteria* to flourish.

BEARS

Montana - Increased grizzly bear sightings suggest the bears are expanding out of the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat wilderness range, officials say. Bears are being seen about five miles south of previous boundaries. People are calling for officials to hire a bear specialist. - *Aug 4, 1998 - USA Today*

TIGER

A rare white Bengal tiger being walked on a leash in Florida killed its trainer after it was startled by construction workers. - *A.P. 8-10-98*

PET PYTHON PUTS THE SQUEEZE ON HER OWNER

A 260-pound Burmese python was shot three times with a shotgun and beheaded after ripping a toilet out of the floor and trying to swallow her American owner.

When police arrived at Christopher Paquin's home, Squeeze, his 19-foot pet snake, was coiled around the 27-year-old with her jaws locked around his forearm. 'I was calm until I couldn't get her off me,' Paquin said. 'Once she got down to the bone it really started hurting.'

Paquin's rescuers finally separated man from beast. Officials stunned the snake by spraying it with a fire extinguisher and then shot it three times with a shotgun. 'The damn thing was still moving,' said Paquin. His hand, which now features 35 snake-tooth marks, is in a cast.

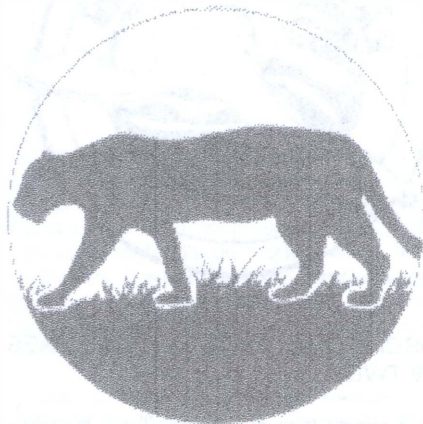
The snake was loose because Paquin was cleaning its cage. When he tried to put her back in the cage, she attacked. 'I'll never get another one,' he said. - *A.P. 13-10-98*

story that's causing both celebration and nervous glances over the shoulder. Worries are growing that the secretive cougar is getting too comfortable around the booming human population that now shares its habitat. - *A.P. 8-8-98*

MYSTERY CATS

COUGAR ATTACKS INCREASING IN AMERICA...

When concerns about marauding cougars rise, wildlife experts offer reassurances: The typical cougar (a.k.a. mountain lion, puma and panther) is a shy creature that avoids people and prefers to eat deer rather than pets or children.



Washington State game warden Rocky Spencer and a hunter arrived with two hounds to track a cougar after it savaged a family's dog. The hounds came across it just 100 yards into the woods, and the snarling cougar turned on the dogs with a fury that sent both back to the truck to lick their wounds.

'I've had dealings with upwards of 100 mountain lions, and that was the most aggressive I've seen,' Spencer said.

Once hunted nearly to extinction, cougars are on the rebound around the West. It's an ecological success

COUGAR WANDERS INTO DOWNTOWN BUILDING IN CANADA

VICTORIA, British Columbia (Reuters) - Authorities hope to return a cougar to the wilderness after the big cat was discovered wandering inside a downtown building in British Columbia's capital city.

'It scared the crap out of me,' said Craig Grebicki, an employee of Scott Plastics, who managed to trap the cougar in a room by throwing a chair against a door.

Conservation officers shot the cat with a tranquilliser dart and captured it without incident. It was unclear what prompted the cat, a three-year-old female, to enter the building, but officers described it as 'extremely malnourished.' 'She walked in right by one of our sales reps. He just saw the tail and at first he thought it was a dog,' said Sheila Simpson, a company employee.

British Columbia has had a very dry summer this year, making it difficult for animals including cougars and bears to find enough food in the wild. A cougar was also recently captured prowling in a park in a Vancouver suburb. - *Reuters 09/16/98*

PANTHERS? - MAY BE RIVER OTTERS!

If it's black as a panther and looks like a cougar, it could be a river otter, according to Washington State officials.

'Otters are definitely cat-looking in appearance,' said Curt Wood, state Fish and Wildlife Department officers in Lincoln County. In addition to a flat head and a whiskery face, river otters have long tails and dark fur that, when wet, can appear jet black - just as a number of credible witnesses here have described recently.

- *The Spokesman-Review 2 Oct 1998*

FIERCE PANTHER TURNS OUT TO BE REAL PUSSYCAT

A large, mysterious black beast that fearful Novato residents believed to be a panther was videotaped yesterday on a hillside looking suspiciously like a fat

cat. A well-fed house cat is, in fact, what state Department of Fish and Game officials concluded the animal was, but at least one resident refuses to believe them. 'I've had cats all my life, big and small and this is not a house cat,' said Brooke Toothman, 45. 'What I saw was a huge animal.'

Nonetheless, teenagers at an orientation barbecue yesterday at Sinaloa Middle School didn't seem to be worried. 'A panther, here?' said Casey Arnold, 14, as he stuffed a hot dog in his mouth. 'That would be the day.' - August 22, 1998

DARTMOOR 'LION' SOUGHT

Two reports of a large cat with a mane on Dartmoor, S.W. England, sparked a major operation on 18 Nov 98, with convoys of up to 20 vehicles, comprising police and journalists, driving through various small villages and country roads. Armed police and tracker dogs scoured fields and woodland. No zoos or wildlife parks have reported a missing lion, and the favoured explanation is that, if the sightings are genuine, it is an escaped or released pet that was kept illegally.

Roundup of other 'beast' alerts:

Colorado: Wheat Ridge - mountain lion on loose; police says there were 2 sightings - 18-8-98.
California: Jarrahdale - cougar-like cat blamed for unexplained livestock killings. - 1998.
Maine: Fryeburg - reports of mountain lion. (Last confirmed sighting was 1938) - 15-8-98
New Mexico: Las Cruces - mountain lion in back yard captured by tranquilliser darts - 21-8-98.
Texas: Colleyville - panther? Traps baited with meat are being set out - 25-8-98.
Washington: Davenport - sightings of cougar-like black cats may be river otters. - 2-10-98
Wisconsin: 'mountain lion' reported wandering in woods west of Interstate 90-94.

British Columbia: Victoria - cougar wanders into downtown building. - 1998.

UK: Herts - 'puma-style animal' seen roaming in the north London suburbs... 27-9-98

LAKE & SEA MONSTERS



SEARCH FOR ELUSIVE REPTILE TAKES NEW TWIST

Wildlife experts from Florida and Texas have been asked to help city officials catch a mysterious reptile swimming in a park lake. An anonymous group says don't bother, as it prompted the reptile sightings last week by placing an inflatable toy alligator into Washington Park's south lake.

'The timing of the Washington Park caiman story is no coincidence,' the group said in a fax sent to Denver media outlets. 'That this hoax would share headlines with the crisis in the Clinton White House only serves to underscore the real crisis confronting America - the trivialization of the media.' - A.P. 20-8-98

NESSIE FOOTAGE

Experienced Loch Ness Monster spotters described the latest video footage apparently showing the head of the elusive underwater creature as the most exciting breakthrough of recent years. Gary Campbell, from the Loch Ness Monster Fan Club, believes a film taken by a family on holiday at the loch is the best footage of 'Nessie' he has ever seen.

But wildlife watchers have poured cold water on the theory, claiming the pictures just show an inquisitive seal.

LOREN INVITED TO LOCH NESS

The pursuit of one of this century's most enduring mysteries, the Loch Ness Monster, may be closer to being solved. Dan Scott Taylor, Jr.'s minisub expedition has picked internationally known cryptozoologist Loren Coleman to come along for the ride. Taylor, who built the original 'yellow submarine' to seek Nessie, in 1969, is building a bigger mini submarine to 'finish the job he set out to do in 1969'. And he has invited Coleman along as a technical observer. The NESSA Expedition plans to launch the minisub in June 1999.

CHINA

A Chinese scholar says the monsters that have been reported several times in Tianchi Lake in China's Jilin Province are recorded far back in Chinese history. Gong Yuhai, 69, who studies early Chinese culture, says that the Shanhaijing, a collection of fairy tales, contains many accounts of turtle-shaped animals with a pig's head and black skin, which are quite similar to monsters in the Changbai Mountains, where the lake is located. 28/5/98
China Daily

Giant softshells? - Richard Freeman

CADDY COMES IN FROM THE COLD?

Ted Bousfield, lake monster researcher, suggests that Cadborasaurus and Ogopogo may be related and might have arrived 10,000 years ago. Thus Ogopogo, so the reasoning goes, could have become landlocked in the Okanagan where Columbia River

dams have blocked direct access to the ocean for both salmon and serpents. A rash of Caddy sightings followed the appearance of a newspaper article in which Caddy hunter Bousfield remarked that the creature seemed uncharacteristically coy this year. - *Victoria (BC) Times-Colonist, 21 July 1998*

BHM's**SKUNK APE PROTECTION**

A bill making it illegal to molest a skunk ape has been passed by a Florida legislative committee. Last session, the bill passed committee but never reached the floor. - *Aug 1998*

THE YETI

An American climber said Tuesday he had seen the Yeti, or the Abominable Snowman, while on a skiing expedition on the Chinese side of Mount Everest. Craig Calonica said he saw two Yetis together 'around Sept 17' with thick shining black fur walking like men except a little hunched over at the shoulder. 'Their arms were very long and their hands were very big.' - *Oct 13, 1998 Reuters*

Tyrolean adventurer Reinhold Messner says the 'Yeti' is not a humanoid ape but a large bear, and there are about 1,000 roaming Nepal and Tibet, usually at night. Messner said, after examining its footprints, 'It's clearly a Tibetan bear, similar to a grizzly but with longer hair.' - *Reuters 6-10-98*

Bipedal bears are more unlikely than giant apes - Richard Freeman

BIGFOOT

A 9-foot-tall, yellow-eyed beast making bloodcurdling screams turned a group of campers as shaky as the marshmallows they were roasting when they decided the creature must be the legendary Bigfoot. Tim Ford, 22, told California Department of Fish and Game officials Thursday that he's convinced he saw the elusive man-beast, who he claims left tracks 6 inches wide and 20 inches long in remote Hayfork, about 200 miles north of San Francisco.

'You could see his arms hanging way past his knees,' one camper said.

NEW AND REDISCOVERED



KOKAKO MAY BE OK

Hopes that New Zealand's South Island's kokako may still be alive were raised when two hunters reported a possible sighting. A brief search for the supposedly extinct bird, with steel-grey plumage, was mounted but was called off because of bad weather. A more detailed search will start in two weeks.

The kokako, believed to have been extinct for 30 years, is about the size of a magpie and has distinctive orange-coloured wattles at the base of its beak. The North Island kokako has blue wattles and is not extinct.

MUTANT MOSQUITOES

Biologists say a new species of mosquito is evolving in the tunnels of the London Underground. Researchers at the University of London believe the insects are descendants of mosquitoes that colonised the tunnels a century ago when the railways were being built. Originally bird-biters, they apparently evolved new feeding behaviour, dining on rats, mice, and maintenance workers. 'It looks as if there has been a unique colonisation event,' says biologist Richard Nichols.

MOUSE

British scientists have discovered a mouse in Ecuador that catches fish. The Andes rodent is almost blind; however, it locates fish with its long, sensitive whiskers and drags them from the water with its front paws. - *Globe & Mail 21-8-98*

TERATOLOGY ETC

BUFFALO

Michigan Hanover - A genetically rare baby white buffalo born on a Jackson County ranch three weeks ago has died. The female calf contracted pneumonia, owners said. One of every 40 million buffalo are born white, statistics show. - *USA Today - Aug 19, 1998*

ANIMAL MUTILATIONS

A grisly animal mutilation at a County Down [Ireland] farm is being connected with UFO sightings in the area. Several people in South Armagh and Omeath have reported seeing a large circular ball of light in the evening sky. At the same time the UFO research group QUEST was contacted by a farmer in Carnlough who reported the mutilation of one of his cows. Miles Johnston from Quest said: 'The cow carcass had been drained of blood, the flesh had been removed from its head and its vital organs were gone.'

This is the first known case of its kind in Northern Ireland but it has happened to thousands of animals in the US and Britain.

NO IVORY

Nature is fighting back against Uganda's ivory poachers by dramatically increasing the number of elephants born without tusks, scientists say.

Dr Eve Abe, a Cambridge-educated elephant specialist at the Ugandan Wildlife Authority, said: 'A survey I conducted found that up to 30 per cent of a sample of adult elephants in the Queen Elizabeth Park do not have tusks. Dr Abe's latest report found that 15.5 per cent of the whole female population were tuskless. In the male elephant population the level was 9.5 per cent. A study of the same area in 1930 found only one per cent of elephants without ivory, due to rare mutations.

INSECT EXPERT: 'BUGS CAN READ YOUR MIND'

Be careful what you say in front of a cockroach - it may be able to read your mind. That's according to environmental educator Joanne Lauck of San Jose, California, who claims insects have feelings, and avoid humans who are bugged by bugs. Lauck says she came to the conclusion with the help of a giant Madagascar hissing cockroach named Cedar. When she invited elementary students to pet the bug, one boy made a joke about squashing Cedar. The cockroach then happily crawled around the arms of every student except the boy who wanted to crush the roach.

PALAEONTOLOGY:

WORMS TURN EARLY

Worms may have lived on Earth a billion years ago, Yale University researchers say. They discovered fossilised tunnels that may be burrows left by ancient worm-like creatures that lived in sandbeds beneath a shallow sea that covered what is now central India. Scientists previously thought multicellular animals originated 500 million to 600 million years ago, in a sudden explosion of diversity during the early Cambrian period. 30-9-98

LARGEST GROUP OF DINOSAUR PRINTS FOUND

The world's largest group of dinosaur footprints have been discovered at a site near the Bolivian town of Sucre, a Swiss palaeontologist, Christian Meyer, has announced.

Footprints up to 3 feet long were found in the area, which includes prints of several dinosaur species, making it one of the rarest finds in the world. 'There is no comparable site in the world,' said Meyer. Two weeks later, another discovery was announced by Meyer: 'We found two eggs that could be from dinosaurs,' - adding that the eggs dated back some 68 million years. 'They were found in green limestone and there may be more in other layers.' Reuters 1-8-98, 13-8-98

OTHER PALAEONTOLOGY NEWS ON THE CFZ WEBSITE:

World's smallest mammal fossil found in Wyoming tree stump. Sept 30, 1998

Dinosaurs ruled every continent, looked more bizarre than popular images. Oct 1, 1998

Royal Tyrrell Museum, Alberta, Canada: more details of feathered, turkey-sized theropods. Aug 31, 1998

Andaman Islanders "descended from the first modern humans to migrate across Asia." Sep 98.

New Zealand Maoris Came from Taiwan, DNA analysis suggests. Sep 98.

Dendrochronology (wood dating) could rewrite ancient history in the eastern Mediterranean. 27 Sep 1998

The L.A. "Tar Ranch" (La Brea Tar Pits) discoveries. Sep 1998.

WILD CHILD

Misha Defonseca survived the Europe Holocaust as a seven-year-old Jewish girl by fleeing into the forests to escape from the Nazis and was adopted by a family of wolves. Years later, as a teenager, "for me men were prey. When I needed them, I took them." Misha recalled. "It was the law of the wild - the law of the wolves. I enjoyed men. When I met my husband, I wasn't an angel. I punched people in bars. But he was so patient and I told him everything ... I have the social graces, but I don't trust humans like I trust animals - they're less likely to stab you in the back." - *The Times (UK)* July 21 1998

OTHER NEWS

TIGER-MEAT GOURMET SHOW

A leading Japanese television network has provoked outrage for showing its entertainers eating and enjoying tiger meat in a cooking program filmed in China. The Worldwide Fund for Nature said the program set a terrible example for viewers.

Three Japanese entertainment personalities, shown dining on the tiger at a restaurant in Shanghai, described the meal as delicious and showed no remorse when they learned what they were eating. - *Sept 1998*

REPTILE TRADE ARRESTS

A five-year undercover U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service investigation that successfully infiltrated the illegal reptile trade ended with the arrest of an international wildlife dealer and 2 couriers.

'Reptile smuggling is a high-profit criminal enterprise, and the US is its largest market,' said Service Director J. Clark. 'Sacrificing the world's legally protected rare species to meet the demand for reptiles prized as exotic live collectibles will not be tolerated by this country...' - *A.P. Sept 1998*

GALAPAGOS TURTLES TO BE RESCUED

The Galapagos islands' giant turtles will be evacuated from the archipelago's largest island, Isabela, to get them out of the way of lava from an erupting volcano.

Head of the national park, Chavez, said the turtles were currently nesting, meaning their colonies were dispersed throughout the islands, 600 miles west of the South American mainland.

The islands were visited by English naturalist Charles Darwin in 1835 - *A.P. Sept 1998*

DARWIN'S FINCHES GET BOOST FROM EL NINO

The El Nino weather phenomenon may have wreaked havoc around the world, but for the famed Galapagos finches that clinched for Charles Darwin the truth of evolution it came as a blessing in disguise.

The heavy rains that El Nino brought caused vegetation and insects to flourish all round the archipelago, and this led the finches that feed on them to breed like mad,' scientists at London's Natural History Museum were told. By the time the phenomenon's latest cycle had died out by May this year, the small birds had produced so many offspring that they stopped breeding early. 'They were probably worn out...' - *Reuters 17-9-98*

SLOTH DUNG YIELDS SECRETS

A pile of dung from an ancient sloth has yielded up secrets from the creature that left it 19,000 years ago, in the form of DNA, researchers from the Max Planck Institute have announced.

The team used a new technique to tease the DNA out of the dung, something no one else had been able to do - it shows the long-dead animal ate plants such as capers, mustard, mint and lilies.

The nearly-fossilised faeces were found by Hendrik Poinar of the Institute in a cave 18 miles east of Las Vegas, Nevada.

The cave is full of dried-up animal poop, which researchers have been trying to analyse.

Now, a technique known as polymerase chain reaction (PCR), which makes trillions of copies of tiny gene fragments, making enough product to look at, enabled identification of the animal as a member of the sloth family, 'presumably *Nothotheriops shastensis*, whose bones were found in the cave.'

This giant sloth has been extinct for 11,000 years. But there was DNA in its stool from plants. *Science - July 10, 1998*

WEIRD SCIENCE**WHY DO THEY PIG OUT ON STONES?**

An animal behaviour expert has been given £5,000 to find out why pigs chew stones after eating. Ian Horrell, an animal psychologist from Hull University, will spend the next few months studying the behaviour of Britain's eight million pigs in seven different locations around the country. - *The Times*, Sept 24 1998

TEXAN PAYS LAB \$5 MILLION TO CLONE PET DOG

A Texas millionaire is paying a cloning laboratory \$5 million to produce a living replica of his pet dog Missy. The cloning laboratory of Texas A & M University at College Station had been given two years to produce a clone. Laboratory Director Mark Westhusin said he thought other millionaires would be keen to follow suit. Other laboratories and companies were hoping to move into commercial cloning of pets and racehorses. - *BBC Newsnight* 24-8-98

BACTERIA

THERE are five million trillion trillion bacteria on Earth, give or take a handful, according to a census that confirms that they are the planet's dominant life form. The study has revealed a far greater number than previously thought, 'a five with 30 zeroes after it,' according to Professor William Whitman, a microbiologist at the University of Georgia.

RABIES

A Spanish neurologist, proposing a novel genesis for one of the most feared ghouls in Western culture, says the tale of the blood-sucking predator may have originated with a major rabies epidemic in Europe in the 1700s. Gomez-Alonso said he had always assumed vampires were fictional creatures from Europe's superstitious past.

'Then one day I saw a classic Dracula film,' he said. 'I watched the film more as a doctor than as a spectator, and I became so impressed by some obvious similarities between vampires and what happens in rabies, such as aggressiveness and hypersexuality.'

He said even the vampire's fatal kiss, the bite itself, could be traced to rabies. 'Man has a tendency to bite, both in fighting and in sexual activities,' Gomez-Alonso says. 'The intensification of such tendency by rabies increases the risk of transmission, as the virus is in saliva and other body secretions.' - Sep 1998

EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE?

Scientists are becoming more optimistic that life exists elsewhere than Earth. 'There have been key discoveries that suggests life is simple, straightforward and easy if you have the right conditions,' Bruce M. Jakosky, a University of Colorado planetary scientist, said at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society. 'There is a remarkable change among scientists from just 20 years ago. 'In this solar system alone, there are at least four places besides Earth where life could have evolved. And beyond the sun, untold numbers of stars could be shining on planets teeming with life of some form. 'There has been a revival in the serious search for life.'

A. P. - Oct 14, 1998

DEFORMED FROGS

In a deepening ecological mystery, state scientists have plucked four deformed frogs from a tiny wetland in Norfolk in north-western Connecticut - the opposite corner of the state from a pond where numerous frog deformities have been documented since last year.

The Connecticut survey is part of a nation-wide search by scientists for answers to a 3-year-old mystery. They are trying to find what's causing the deformities and are concerned about the implications for people. If the culprit is a manmade chemical or natural substance, they wonder whether it could someday cause harm in humans.

Frogs are considered a 'sentinel species,' - succumbing early to threats that may later affect humans. Because of their permeable skin and because they live both on the land and in the water, chemicals and pathogens can affect them easily.

This year since July 1, almost weekly sampling surveys at the pond have shown that between 10 percent and 30 percent of frogs caught by volunteer teams had deformities. A sampling usually entails catching at least 50 frogs for observation. The nation-wide search for answers is a loosely co-ordinated scientific effort. Scientists at state and federal agencies, universities, conservation groups and even some individuals report their findings to the North American Reporting Centre for Amphibian Malformations.

Other species of frog are just vanishing; so vexed are the experts that a supermarket tabloid ran a story headlined 'ALIENS STEALING OUR FROGS!' - *The Hartford Courant/A.P. 18 Sept 98*

ROADRUNNER ADAPTS TO DOG FOOD

A study of roadrunners by University of Arizona biologists has determined the desert bird is adapting well despite urban encroachment. The foot-tall creature feasts on unguarded dog food and has territorial spats with rabbits. About 1,200 have been sighted inside Tucson. - *USA Today, July 24, 1998*

PIGEON FLIGHT HAS MYSTERIOUS 90% FAILURE RATE

Some 2,200 homing pigeons competing in two races along the East Coast of the USA never made it home, leaving their handlers wondering if somehow, some way, the birds' legendary instincts went south.

'I've never seen anything like this,' said Earl Hottle, who has been racing pigeons for 37 years. 'Nobody can explain it.'

About 1,600 pigeons vanished out of 1,800 competing in a 200-mile race from northern Virginia to Allentown on Monday. And 600 out of 700 birds were missing after a 150-mile race on the same day from western Pennsylvania to Philadelphia.

Ordinarily, the swift birds should have been back in their lofts in a matter of hours.

'Apparently somewhere they got sidetracked,' said Ron Lizec, who lost 14 birds.

Each weekend in the spring and fall, thousands are trucked up to 600 miles away and released. Relying on their homing instinct and incredible stamina, the pigeons fly directly to their lofts. The ones with the fastest times are the winners.

'Is it unusual? Yes. Is it unprecedented? No,' said Rick Phalen, executive director of the American Racing Pigeon Union in Oklahoma City. 'But I don't have a recent recollection of this big a loss in the country.'

The National Weather Service all but ruled out weather. It said there was a drastic change in wind direction Monday at 3,000 feet, but racing pigeons usually don't climb higher than 250 feet, and fly low on windy days.

Birds of prey? 'The chances that 2,000 hawks would get 2,000 pigeons are pretty unlikely,' racer Dennis Gaugler told the newspaper. 'The birds would scatter when attacked.'

'The truth is that nobody knows what happened,' racer Robert Costagliola told the Morning Call, 'and probably never will.' *Reuters 10-9-98*

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GUBU NORGE

(The 1998 GUST Expedition)

by **Daev Walsh**

Merdre! - "Pere Ubu" (Alfred Jarry)

They sought it with thimbles, they sought it with care;

They pursued it with forks and hope;

They threatened its life with a railway-share;

They charmed it with smiles and soap.'

"The Hunting of the Snark" (Lewis Carroll)

Laden with misgivings, I trundled myself and my luggage through Oslo's Fornebu Airport. It was August 3rd, 1998, and I was there to meet the rest of the GUST (Global Underwater Search Team ^[2])



contingent, with whom I was to travel to Lake Seljordsvatnet, some 130km or so (as the crow flies) west of Oslo. Once there, we were to investigate 250 years of lake monster reports. Before leaving Ireland, I perused Michel Meurger's findings concerning Seljordsvatnet, in particular his references to Halvor Sandsdalen's book on the subject ^[3]. The creature seemed to be a hybrid of the "Havhest" - half horse-half fish, usually shown with a curling fishtail - and the lindorm, or Scandinavian dragon, traditionally portrayed as a serpent with a horse's head, once a huge land snake, later demoted

to murky lakes. Our "sjøormen", or serpent, apparently began its earthly days in a smaller lake, from which it migrated, to Seljordsvatnet.

It transpired that quite a few members were hesitant about committing themselves to the expedition - some of us had even left it to the last moment to pay for our flights. These doubts were not so much based on the idea of looking for a lake monsters, but rather the eccentric behaviour of Jan-Ove Sundberg, the leader of the expedition. One Swedish team member told me that he had been accused of being a spy for a Swedish UFO magazine. I veered close to being told to stay at home because Sundberg felt I came across as too sceptical in a Sunday newspaper interview, and I had gotten wind of some pretty odd shenanigans in which Sundberg was involved, near Loch Ness in 1971 ^[4].

Nevertheless, whether it was the taste of adventure, sheer devilment, or perhaps a genuine "quest" for The Serpent, ten of the twelve team members convened in the arrivals hall of the airport around 1640, and subsequently made for our transport.

The expedition was to turn into one of the most hilarious farces I've ever had the pleasure to be implicated in, and as I write, more than a week after its apparent conclusion, the dust is still rising. A 52-minute Discovery Channel documentary on GUST is due in the autumn, and a BBC series on 'science mysteries' is to feature footage, and will be shown next spring. Kurt Burchfiel's article on the shenanigans will appear on the *Strange* magazine website ^[5], and my own is appearing in *Fortean*

Times. And then there's the mini-war that Sundberg himself has waged on several of the expedition members, and our very own Mr. Downes!

EDITOR'S NOTE: I have never made any secret of the fact that since the break-up of my marriage I have been receiving psychotherapy. Indeed it is one of the minor themes of my new book *The Rising of the Moon*. I have also made no secret of the fact that I have been known to hoist a wee dram on occasions. Sundburg, however, decided

that I was a psychotic alcoholic who, in his words had "brought shame upon my country". He made these accusations about me over the Internet, and to my pleasure, large portions of the international Cryptozoological community came to my defence and NO-ONE backed up his extraordinary claims.

However, after the expedition he sent me 'doctored' e-mails purporting to be from Daev Walsh claiming that Daev himself held me in extremely low esteem and that I was essentially a dangerous lunatic. As this article proves, this is far from being the case!

In the light of the revelations included in this article I feel that anything Sundburg says should be taken *cum grano salis*, and essentially neither I, nor anyone else involved in the Centre for Fortean Zoology wish to have anything more to do with him. However, we have decided to eschew any further mud-slinging with someone whose behaviour has been, at best, unwise, and at worst libellous and unpleasant!

Lake Seljordsvatnet, is something of a paradise - squeezed in by 1500m high mountains, it's some 14km long, and a kilometre or so wide. According to the apparently official chart, it's 138m deep - there were reports of an area of 157m, and one day we found a depth 147m - if our echo sounder was truthful. Seljord - which has adopted The Serpent as its coat-of-arms - is an attractive scattered community of 3,000 or so, and has just one main drag of businesses housed in wooden buildings.



The local council had put some effort into GUST, as part of a tourism campaign, and various technology companies sponsored our equipment. During the two weeks I spent in Seljord, we used two different Simrad

echo sounders, a side-scan sonar, a GPS hooked into a Konmap moving map system, and a couple of remote-control submarines.

I wasn't the only one to be quite surprised by the huge emphasis put on the equipment, much of it for the benefit of the media, who came in their dribs and drabs. We had no more than a perfunctory lesson on the sounders and sonar, and using the submarines seemed to be a mite premature -- yes, there were reports of underwater caverns, but I felt the chances of any anomalous creature strutting its stuff in front of an underwater camera to be rather remote.

Our one chance to send a sub down to the deepest part of the lake had to be abandoned, due to a heavy swell. As for our collective inexperience in using the other equipment, this led to much disagreement later on -- we all pretty much agreed that we were using it incorrectly, but there was little agreement on the nature of the misuse. This was not helped by problems with generators, and the regular breakdown of equipment.

On the first day of 'shift' - we split into teams of four, and mounted three shifts spanning 24 hours in the home-made "Mother One" (built by Norwegian team member Arne Thomassen). There was a lot of excitement over a few of the echo-sounder traces, and one report of a visual sighting from the road by Ulf Burman and Peter Caspersson - my notes read:

'7 August 1998 1140 sighting by Peter C. and Ulf 75-100m north of Hugsdalen, momentarily seen thru trees from the road, partially obscured. 3m long black object breaking surface, not a wave. South-north alignment. Conditions, water choppy, SE wind, bright sunny day, with light cumulous clouds.'

Later in the expedition, this sighting seemed to be forgotten about, in favour of 'evidence' that Jan himself had been involved in gathering. Dr. Jason Gibb had made some interesting bacterial finds while diving, leading to further speculation on the 'exploding log theory'^[6] and Ulf Burman "filmed" lengthy footage of apparently live objects moving just below the surface of the lake, leaving light 'v' wakes - all of this was practically ignored by the team leader, Jan.

Reports of 'tracks' - footprints in the silt on the bottom of the lake - had been claimed by a local man, seen when he was diving a "year" before. Jan went hell for

leather on this, regardless of the testimonies of our scuba divers that the bottom was loose sediment. Any mark in that kind of bottom would be gone in a few hours, but Jan still insisted that we go looking for them.

In an email to me after the expedition he said, "I think that the man fooled us, that the tracks was a practical joke that went too far," and later that "I, Peter and other Swedes and also Arne -- sensed there was something wrong here and we did all we could to get our hands on [the witness], to have him show us exactly where the tracks were supposed to be. But the man avoided us at all costs, making up stories that he was on vacation, on the harvest, here and there and everywhere and at the end we just knew he was laying (sic) to us."

In the course of the expedition, this certainly wasn't communicated to either Dr. Gibb or myself, in fact I went out of my way to emphasise the uselessness of the information given to me by the witness by phone, but was badgered instead for my scepticism.

After a spate of large echo soundings - some up to a couple of metres long, Jan began telling the press, and anyone who cared to listen, that we had had contact with an object 5m long (the size seemed elastic). I mightn't have had much experience with echo sounders, but at least some of us understood that echo sounders -- and sonars -- don't draw 2D pictures of 3D objects, they merely detect differences in density. They do not give any kind of conclusive evidence of size or nature of an object.

Things began to get really silly when Jan decided that he had taken photos of the alleged beastie. He told me that he was alone on the deck at the time, and didn't want to disturb the film crew, who were at work in the cabin. I got a different version from "several" others present, who maintained that he wasn't on his own, and that what was seen, and photographed, was merely a series of waves or boat wakes. Nevertheless, Jan told us that he intended to "sell" the photos to none other than the *Daily Express*, for the princely sum of 60,000 Norwegian Crowns - 6,000 Irish pounds (USD8000) or so. And so, before they were actually developed, Jan was planning to sell them.

On August 13th, he had Arne drive him to Oslo, where Kodak developed his slides. On his return, he maintained that he had something very interesting to show us, which he did, in the form of an after-dinner slide show.

Unfortunately, where Jan could apparently see a 'serpent' in the photos, no one else could -- a couple of people said 'well maybe', while marine biologist Jason Gibb and I voiced our opinions that the photographs "showed" nothing other than, well, waves. We didn't discount the fact that Jan had seen something anomalous, or that there was anything big and wriggly under the surface of the water, but we emphasised that the photographs "displayed" only waves.

A vote was called -- who wanted to sell them? There was a 10-2 vote against. Jan was surprised, as he thought we would like the money. None of us needed it quite "that" badly, so Jan said he would sell them for himself -- 'what about the contract?'; was the bemused response. Jan suggested that 'Well, we can change the contract', which gave rise to laughter of disbelief.

Obviously feeling cornered, he then attempted to put the team on a collective guilt trip -- after telling us that he thought "we" could do with the money, he changed tack, telling us that as Arne had paid for boat fuel from his pocket, it was necessary to sell the photos to cover costs, or else pay 500Kkr (IR50, or USD62) each. Jason reasonably pointed out that he would be happy to pay that amount if it saved his integrity, and I added my opinion that people don't forget these photos, they would show up in coffee table books for eternity, with "our" names attached^[7].

The meeting broke up, leaving a definite rift in the camp. This was the evening of Thursday 13th, and until the afternoon of the 15th, Jan not only sulked, but declined to speak English and was rather curt to any of the Swedish or Norwegian team members who he felt had thwarted his plans.

The whole shebang was getting far too silly. I was getting tired of the lack of proper research -- here we were looking for a flesh and blood creature, without so much as a cursory glance at the local food chain. Jason and Kurt Burchfiel were of a not dissimilar opinion, as Jan's dismissive attitude towards any of our constructive suggestions was really starting to grate.

And so it came to pass that Kurt and I decided that we no longer wished to have our names attached to the burgeoning circus that GUST had now become. At a briefing on the afternoon of Saturday 15th, we calmly explained our reasons. Kurt explained how he felt that Jan had gathered together a bunch of genuine people – who were seriously interested – and used them in his quest for money and notoriety. I finished off by how I found it unacceptable that the members of the team who were unable to speak Swedish or Norwegian had been cut out of the information loop, when English was supposed to have been the official language of the expedition. We rose, and left the room.

Jan has since accused me of looking at him with '*cold staring, murderous eyes*', and having directed our resignation in 'an aggressive manner'. I would like to ensure the reader, that no such behaviour was forthcoming from this rather mild-mannered writer.

Kurt and I spent the next day winding up some of the parts of the documentary that needed to be finished – 'perception tests', using floating logs. Jan, aboard "Mother One", hung about offshore from where we were filming, taking photographs of us. Those interested can see the use to which such photos are put by ambling along to my *GustUp* page where they can see my very own contribution to Jan's rather surreal campaign against me (he seems convinced that I have some hidden agenda) ^[8].

Apart from the general accepted opinion – as voiced by Kurt, that Jan's main motives were money and fame etc., I spent much time considering "*other motives*", and I quote here from Patrick Harpur's wonderful book "*Daemonic Reality*" ^[9]:

'A quest, can perhaps be imagined as an extroverted version of the shaman's introversion - perhaps they are the outside and the inside of the same Way. Unlike the shaman, who is passive in the face of the dismembering otherworldly beings, the quester is active, singleminded, even obsessive. To draw mythological analogies, he is less like Orpheus, the archetypal shaman, than like Odysseus, Jason and Aeneas, whose journeys took place through this world while beset at every turn by intrusions from the other. (In Christian terms, the quest becomes the pilgrimage while the shaman's journey becomes the mystic's ascent to God.) The danger for the shaman is that he might travel too far or too badly prepared

into the Otherworld and so lose his soul; the danger for the quester is just the opposite - the Otherworld is too close to him, threatening to overwhelm and possess him. Even as he clings to his this-worldly perspective, which the shaman is compelled to give up, he is bombarded by the otherworldly. The song of the Siren lures him towards the mind-wrecking rocks. Paranoia is always just around the corner.'

In my opinion, Jan's quest seems to operate on two levels, as apart from the money and fame quest, he seemed to be following the path of the classic quester, in pursuit The Serpent (note capitals and singularisation), whatever it may be – the Nemesis of the quester, a form of self-sacrifice? Even the search plan had a heading, "*The Search for The Serpent*". Jan's confirmed this in an email this week: 'internally we were taking about the serpent or the serpents but to the media I said we weren't sure there was unknown animals in the lake'.

If I may be allowed to quote selectively from "Brewer's Myth and Fable", under the heading of 'Serpent':

'In Scandinavian myth, the Nidhogg, the Dread Biter, is evil as living at the root of the Yggdrasil and trying to destroy it.' (The Yggdrasil is the 'world-tree' is the connection between heaven and earth, and it is 'the tree of life and knowledge, and of time itself'.

If I'm right, and Jan is something of a 'serpent quest', it's rather ironic that after he returned to Sweden, he decided to accuse me of "Satanism". This is apparently due to my devil's advocacy, my occasional habit of signing my emails in Irish, i.e. 'is mise le meas' (which translates as 'yours respectfully'), and my also occasional use (when the whim is upon me) to sign myself as 'Daithí Breathnach'. Jan wondered if I was 'speaking in tongues', and whether I'd changed my name for membership of a 'satanic sect'.

I was tossing around such serpentine ideas in my head when I found myself, on August 18th, in Vigeland Park in Oslo, designed by sculptor Gustav Vigeland. 'Guarding' the park's bridge were four pillars, each depicting a human, in the nasty process of being savaged by weird beasts, in three cases "serpents". Old Gustav seemed to have a whole primeval Human versus The Serpent thing going on, as depicted in his sculpture and metalwork – such as the Park gates ^[10].

To conclude this little diatribe and fly on the walls report, I would like to emphasise that despite all the craziness listed above, much of our stay in Norway was quite enjoyable, and have some great friendships have been forged. I'm only sorry that the situation did not lend itself to a serious study of the area - e.g. witness reports and local tales were regarded as "actual fact", whereas anyone who cares to approach the problem from an inclusionist point of view will realise that there are huge coatings of "recurring motifs" which need to be stripped off lake monster reports, myths and tales before anything useful can be derived. A good read of Michel Meurger's "*Lake Monster Traditions*" ^[1] should elicit some enlightenment with regard to the proliferation of such motifs. As Harpur says:

In the case of lake monsters, Meurger established that the following motifs - he calls them 'folklore beliefs' - are pretty much universal. Beginning with the lake itself, it is "bottomless"; it "inter-connects" with other lakes or the sea; it is the scene of anomalous "luminous phenomena"; it is impenetrably "dark"; it has submarine "caverns"; it has strong currents and eddies or whirlpools which are caused by (or sometimes synonymous with) serpents; it is prone to unexpected "squalls"; it has swallowed up "divers who never return".

Until these motifs are weeded out - not discarded, just separated out from the usual speculation surrounding lake monsters - expeditions such as GUST will be stuck in the mire of pseudo-science, and will hinder rather than help cryptozoology and fortan research.

A Snark? We didn't get a chance to find a Boojum.

* * * * *



The Team picture. L - R:

Davy Russell (USA), Kurt Burchfiel (USA) Arne Thomassen (Norway), Dave Walsh (Ireland), Ulf Burman (Sweden), Jan-Ove Sundberg (Sweden), Eric Joye (Belgium), Peter Caspersson (Sweden), Magnus Backlund (Sweden), Peter Lakbar (Sweden), Vemund Bjorge (Norway) and Jason Gibb (UK)

REFERENCES/NOTES:

1. GUBU: 'Conor Cruise O'Brien invented the term GUBU in 1983, after [Charles J.] Haughey [former Irish prime minister] had called the discovery of a young serial killer hiding in the flat of the government attorney general he had appointed "grotesque, unbelievable, bizarre, and unprecedented." The term GUBU stuck, and stayed, and finally outlasted Haughey's career itself. It will be the epitaph of a man who saw himself as both a Tammany ward-boss and the Soul of the Nation.' - Kevin Myers
2. Official site: <http://www.bahnhof.se/~wizard/gust/>
3. HJ Sandsdalen - "*Seljord's Ormen*", Seljord Kommune ISBN 82-992140-0-9
4. The *Sunday Business Post* (Ireland) June 28 1998, Page 11, TW Holiday - *The Goblin Universe* pages 174-177

The Return of *Gulo gulo*

by Terry Hooper

*(Terry Hooper runs EAR - the
Exotic Animals Register)*

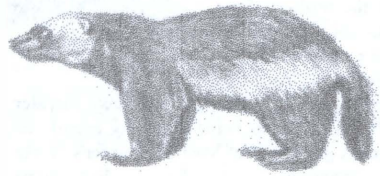
EDITOR'S NOTE: The subject of whether or not wolverines are living wild in the United Kingdom is one which we have covered on several occasions in recent issues.

Terry Hooper has always been adamant that they are here, other contributors to *Animals & Men* have equally adamantly taken the opposite view. In Issue 17 Chris Moiser presented a workable hypothesis to explain SOME sightings of creatures reported to be Wolverines. Clinton Keeling has made comment on his suggestions in his regular column, Tom Anderson's comments are in the letters pages and Terry Hooper has submitted this lengthy reply.

In issue 19 Chris will be replying to both Clin and Terry.....)

Chris Moiser's article (A&M17) on dirty albinistic badgers (or even erythristic ones) sparking off wolverine reports was very interesting and I'm sure there are quite a few people awaiting a heated debate on the possibility of wolverines living in the UK. ⁽¹⁾ Well, there isn't going to be one.

Ernest Neal's book on badgers is, of course, a classic. Neal notes that some badgers are greyer than others, in fact, some may be described as "really silvery". He also refers to photographs of a badger cub he took in 1944 in Conigre of a cub "with a black velvet-like coat yet its companion of the same was quite normal in colouration" ⁽²⁾. There was some white visible "so it is not a true melanistic variety, but it approaches this condition."



Neal does indeed point out that albinos, off-white or slightly yellow like a ferret, and with pink eye, are not rare. In fact, Phoebe Cooper who covers an area of West Wales for the EAR, has noted albinos in her area. I can add other instances to this which shows that Neal's work, even fifty years later, is still the best reference source.

The erythristic form is a more usual variation according to Neal. The dark parts of the coat are replaced by a sandy-red; Neal reports that a "fine specimen" of the red form was to be found in Taunton Museum - it was killed on the Blackdown Hills. I am still waiting to hear if this specimen has survived. Reports of this type came from a number of counties in Neal's day and still do today. Add to this Neal's notes on yellow badgers and the will understand that not everything about badger colouration is - dare I say it - black and white.

So, despite 55,000+ being killed by cars each year and a further estimated 16,000 shot, snared and baited each year (that's 71,000 dead each year), the colour variations are still there.

E.Kay, Robinson and many other naturalists have stories to tell which all compare in details. Usually a person or a couple will rush out of woods and in a rather panic-stricken state, will report having seen or been approached by a bear. On each occasion investigations have proven the Bear to be a badger. It is almost impossible to believe that anyone brought up in England would not recognise old Brock but it still happens.

I suppose that, at the risk of being boring, I'll repeat my old adage; "people see woodlice and report armadillos".

I have immense respect for Chris and his expertise and knowledge but I would certainly not mis-identify the badger on last issue's cover as a wolverine. But, it must be said, I have been studying wolverine photographs and footage a great deal. Peter Public might well do so, however.

The people I deal with are usually all very knowledgeable about native and non-native wild life.

One forester went to investigate a report of an animal attacking a domestic cat and found the cat looking "as though it had been through a meat mincer". He followed a trail and found the culprit a few yards ahead; it was without doubt a wolverine and was followed some distance.

As this animal was heading for a built up area (which it gradually moved away from) the forester called the police and a dog handler was on site in six minutes - because he had just investigated another incident involving the same animal.

This area also saw a sheep attacked and killed in front of four witnesses during good daylight - and their descriptions could not be faulted. A farmer also had a sheep killed in another incident and the RSPCA Inspector involved had seen big cat kills in north America and ruled this out. He also ruled out dogs, foxes or any other regular predator. However, when he learned that his predecessor and three others had been investigating wolverines in the area, his response was; "Ahh. Now, yes, that does make sense..."

We call this area of the English-Welsh border 'Area A'. We literally know where the wolverine came from, how many got away, in what areas they were heading and how widespread they are now. The origins of these wolverines in the area go back as far as 1969.

North Wales, Area B, has a suspected small wolverine population.

Area G covers yet another part of Wales where tracks were found, sheep killed, and a number of very credible people saw and described wolverine.

Area D covers parts of Devon and Cornwall and the most notable sighting here involved naturalist Trevor Beer and his daughter who saw two wolverines in daylight. Both are fellow members of the British Naturalist Association (f. 1905). Neither would mis-identify badgers as wolverines in those conditions. In the Cornwall area in 1980 two RSPCA inspectors looked into unusual animal deaths for which a wolverine turned out to be responsible.

Area E is the North-west Somerset area where there have been a number of close proximity wolverine sightings. Police tell me they have had no reports further north of the county yet.

Area F is the North-east Coast of Scotland where a possible pair of wolverines were known to exist in the 1970s. This area is still under investigation.

Area G is in a part of Kent where one naturalist believes he quite clearly saw a wolverine but we've had no other reports so far.

Police, foresters, farmers and some animal welfare groups only pass information on to the AP in strictest confidentiality. With some we have a two way written confidentiality contract. As soon as big cats or exotics are reported we get the "loony fringe" driving around farmland and housing estates in four wheel drive vehicles and with, illegally, high powered weapons and certain other individuals we know of pop up as "hunters for hire".

The police, farmers and others do not want this. Besides which we need to study reports and, if possible, the animals in question. Yes, it upsets certain naturalists but that's just tough!.

Wolverines are, like many other animals that make "good hunting", much maligned and have over-exaggerated reputations. They are as elusive as the wolverines in their overseas habitats, and they display the same shyness here in the UK. While attempts by hunters and farmers in northern Europe to exterminate wolverines continues, in the UK they are doing quite well.

In a year or so we ought to have the information that people like Chris require but we will not endanger any animal. The British Naturalist Association seem to accept that we have new, introduced native species in the UK -including wolverine- and in 1999 my paper on the subject will be published in its esteemed journal, *Countryside*.

Chris' article is based on solid data he has and his point of view, as far as certain cases are concerned, is one I agree with. But I will not be shaken from the stance that wolverines are here and are breeding well.

REFERENCES

1. I have covered the subject of wolverines a couple of times in the *EAR Bulletin* and ought to note that even the MAFF and Dept. of The Environment admit that wolverine are in the UK.

2. NEAL, Ernest, *The Badger*. (Collins, London. 1971): pp 8-12

I invite correspondence on wolverines or any exotic living wild in the UK. Write to me at: 85 Risdale Road, Ashton Vale, Bristol, or telephone me on: 0117 955 0932

EDITOR'S NOTE: We must apologise for not having printed the correct credits to the picture used in the last issue - our front cover photograph was not, as implied, either copyrighted to us or to Chris Moiser but to Porfell Animal Land in Cornwall where the picture was taken. Many apologies to all concerned.

CRYPTOZOOLOGICAL SHARKS

by Allan E. Munro

Much considered among marine cryptozoologists are the possible existence of giant seals, basiliosaurs and plesiosaurs. Much less attention is placed on the possible existence of unknown species of sharks, despite the discovery of the megamouth. Here I have collected a few cryptozoological sharks, and I have placed them into four categories.

SHARKS AS SEA SERPENTS

Often commented upon is a shark caught by Captain S. W. Hanna at New Harbour, Maine and reported in an American journal known as the *Sea Side Press* in 1880, that was described as a young sea serpent, that was about 25 feet long and only 10 inches in diameter, shaped like an eel. The animal, dead when found, had a flat head and a snout that projected and was noted to overhang the small mouth, which contained small teeth. When naturalists enquired, Captain S. W. Hanna gave more details.

The skin was not like a scale-fish, but more like a dog-fish or shark, though a great deal finer in quality. I did not save the fish for the reason that I did not know what I had caught. In fact, I considered it a streak of ill-luck rather than good fortune, having torn my nets very badly and otherwise bothering me in my business. The body was round or very near that form ... the colour of its back was of a slate or fish colour; belly, greyish-white ... The head did resemble that of a shark, only more stunted, i.e., it did not lengthen out like those of a sharks. The mouth was very small, not any larger than the mouth of a good-sized dog-fish, with fine teeth, located at the extreme end of the head or nose.

Captain S. W. Hanna's animal has been likened to a frilled shark, but the frilled shark does not have a typical shark snout, and this animal cannot be a species of frilled shark, but an unrelated lineage of elongated sharks. The sighting of an unknown animal in the Kyle of Lochalsh by Dr., Farquhar Matheson and his

wife in 1893, however, is possibly a frilled shark. What was reported as a long, thin straight neck as tall as the boat's mast rose out of the water ahead. This was described as being brown, with a ruffle at what was described as the junction between the neck and head (which was said to join the neck from behind rather than underneath, as is how the head of an elongate shark would join the spine). Although Dr. Farquhar Matheson believed this to be the head and neck of a reptile, no body could be seen underwater. It could be that the ruffle of what was described as the neck was the gills of a shark, with part of the body raised out of the water. More like the animal caught by Captain S. W. Hanna is a report from the south-western Chinese coast in 1861, reported in the log of Captain Boyle of the Beaver, that featured a stranded snake-like shark that reached 24 metres long. Boyle requested that the head be cut off, and had the lower jaw cut off so that he could see the inside of the mouth. This was likened to a snake, but with three rows of soft teeth and a vertical gridiron-shaped feeding apparatus at the back of the mouth. The snake-like head had a snout that was noticeably flat, and this is also noted in the catch of Captain S. W. Hanna, and this hints at a shark identity. Yet another elongate shark was reported in the Shipping Gazette for 1886, at Carabelle in Florida. The animal was said to be 49 feet long and 6 feet in circumference. The animal had a shark-like head and also had a tail with what the report described as formidable fins. The animal was caught from a fishing boat with a shark hook, and was towed wildly until it was tired out then was shot.

THE GIANT SHARK

The oceans were once home to a giant shark known as *Carcharocles* (not *Carcharodon*) megalodon. This animal, was over twice as long as the unrelated great white shark but was similar in habits, being an inshore surface dweller. It has been suggested that the *C. megalodon* survives today. In 1918, ichthyologist David G. Stead was told by fishermen at Port Stephens N.S.W. that heavily weighted 3.5 foot long crayfish pots had been effortlessly towed away by what was described as a white shark estimated to be 115 to 300 feet long (up to more than five times as long as megalodon), although this is almost certainly an exaggeration. Author Zane Grey was sailing off Rangiroa, when he saw a shark that was

longer than his boat (which he measured as 35 to 40 feet long) that was yellow or green, unlike a great white shark. Five or six years later, about 100 miles to the northwest of Rangiroa, his son Loren Grey had a similar experience with a yellowish shark. This shark had a brown tail, and Loren could estimate the head as 10 to 12 feet across and the body as between 40 and 50 feet long. The Zane Grey sighting was in either 1927 or 1928, whilst the Loren Grey sighting was in 1933. The Polynesians who are fishermen in N.S.W. believe that the sea is home to a fish known as the lord of the deep. This animal is said to be twice as long as the upper size estimate Loren Grey gave for his Rangiroa sighting, and nearly twice as large as megalodons were. It has been suggested that they are megalodons that live in the deep sea and eat squid. However, megalodon was a shallow water animal, and no remains of *Megalodon* have been proven to have been later than Pliocene.

TIMOR SEA CARPET SHARK

It is possible that giant versions of the sea-bottom sharks known as the wobbegongs or carpet sharks exist in the Timor Sea. These animals are vertically flattened and rather slow moving, being camouflaged and waiting for prey to swim close enough to attack. This prey does not include swimmers, for wobbegongs do not feed on mammals and are too small to bite unless provoked. However, the natives of the Timor Sea tell of the ground shark, a man eating shark that, rather than give chase, attacks swimmers who approach the sea bottom. The ground shark seems to be a giant form of wobbegong.

THE TADPOLE-LIKE SEA ANIMALS

Photographer Robert le Serrec was near Hook Island when he spied and photographed in shallow water a large injured animal of a rarely reported type of water animal on the 12th of December 1964. The animal was similar in shape to a giant tadpole, but Robert le Serrec said that it was 70 feet long. Such sea animals are occasionally reported, on three occasions by more than one person (such as on the 11th of September in 1876, when Captain Webster of the *Nestor*, together with passengers and crew, saw such an animal in the

Malacca Straits). One account comes from Captain Brocklehurst in 1880.

Sitting alone on poop of steamer Oceanic at noon, looking at flying fish, saw a long serpent in water 1 or 2 feet below surface, alongside the vessel, thought length 40 feet, circumference 2 to 4 feet, pale yellow colour, dark line on back and on ribs, head a little larger than body, could not see any fins, saw it for 5 or 6 mins and then mentioned it to friends on board.

This type of animal, which is yellow with black stripes, has a shape like a giant tadpole, 18 to 60 metres long, and has a head that merges into the body and a pointed, whip-like tail. The animal is probably a member of the sharks. Although the upper end of the range of sizes reported is probably inaccurate, there is room in the sea for undiscovered planktonivorous sharks and rays.

I recommend for those interested in mysterious sharks, "From Flying Toads To Snakes With Wings" by Karl Shuker. "In Search Of Prehistoric Survivors" contains material on the lord of the deep. Books on general marine cryptozoology sometimes contain material on mysterious sharks.

THE MYSTERIOUS PUERTO RICAN LAMPREY

by Jonathan Downes

EDITOR'S NOTE: it is quite peculiar - as I have noted before - to be writing an 'Editor's Note' to something which you, yourself have written but on occasion it is the only logical thing to do. I have been a professional foraeon zoologist for many years now and I have written many hundreds of thousands of words on the subject. As regular readers will know, together with my colleagues at the *Centre for Foraeon Zoology* I have conducted a number of investigations into mysterious animals around the world.

One of the problems with *Cryptozoology per se* is that in many cases there is very little evidence other than anecdotal for the existence of a particular creature. In the tale I am about to relate, which is, by the way, taken from my forthcoming book *Only Fools and Goatsuckers* I tell the sad story of how, one Friday evening on the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico, I held an unknown animal literally in the palm of my hand without actually realising it!

About an hour before dusk we managed to get back to some "on the ground" (or in fact "in the water") investigating. Several researchers, including those cited by Scott Corales in his excellent "*Chupacabras and other Mysteries*" had noted that the food chain upon the island of Puerto Rico had appeared to have gone completely awry.

We have already seen how both Graham and I were disappointed at the lack of small fauna in El Yunque. Although certain folk within the ufological and paranormal research communities will no-doubt have blamed this natural imbalance either on the arcane experiments of the darker side of the United States security forces, or indeed upon the Chupacabra itself, we felt that it was far more likely that these depredations are the result of indiscriminate use of pesticides and artificial fertilisers on the lowland farms.

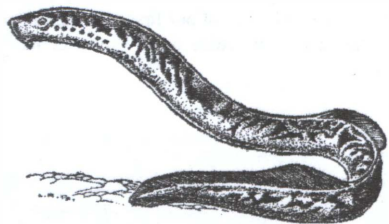
There was, however, one reasonably foolproof way that we could check this hypothesis, and this was to examine the zoofauna of one of the lowland rivers that flowed directly from El Yunque itself. As anyone who has known me for any length of time will tell you, there is an innate attraction between me and running water which has taken up large parts of my life since I was a small child. I have never been able to pass a river or stream without investigating its depths, net in hand, in search of whatever fauna and flora lurk within. This little river was no exception.

As the AVP posse interviewed Graham I went off to do what I do best - I rolled up my trouser legs and went paddling. Unlike the situation in the rain forest high above us there was no shortage of small life in the water. I noted at least three species of fresh water shrimps and several species of tiny armoured catfish. Most interestingly from my point of view - I caught a lamprey.

Lampreys have always been of particular interest to me. They are amongst the most primitive of vertebrates and have fascinated me now for nearly three decades. The Encarta Encyclopaedia describes them:

"Lamprey, common name for any of about 40 species of smooth-skinned, eel-like, jawless fishes. Lampreys are widely distributed in the streams and seas of temperate and subarctic regions worldwide, except for waters off southern Africa. Adult forms of parasitic species live on the blood of fishes and sometimes devastate fisheries. Like the related hagfish, the lamprey has a pistonlike tongue that creates suction when the mouth is placed against an object. Numerous small teeth on the mouth and tongue pierce the flesh of fishes. The animal has no bony skeleton, its chief support being a flexible cartilaginous rod.

All lampreys breed by ascending freshwater streams to spawn once before wasting away and dying in two to three months. Eggs hatch in two to three weeks. The blind and toothless larvae burrow in the mud, straining water through their mouths to capture small life forms for food. The larva is so unlike the adult that scientists formerly believed it to be a member of a special genus (Ammocoetes). It remains in the mud for at least four years before undergoing a metamorphosis and departing for its adult habitat. Adults are about 91 cm (about 36 in) long."



The problem is that like any cursory description this one leaves out more than it includes. I find these tiny creatures fascinating and their macabre zoology perfectly mirrors the lifestyle of the more esoteric paranormal entities which I have also dedicated much of my life to searching for. I seem to have an innate fascination for blood suckers (whether they be

of the undead or the parasitic type), and the fact that I found a well grown lamprey in a stream in chupacabra country seemed like a good omen for the next part of our journey.

I watched it for about ten minutes. It was about eight inches in length and an olive greenish colour. It hung on to the algae covered rocks with its sucker, and moved like a tendril of some bizarre water weeds in the current of the stream. It was perfectly adapted to its environment and I wished that I could have stayed there longer to observe it. It is one of the worse parts of going on expeditions is that whilst you are in a certain place your time is so limited that you are unable to carry out all the tangential investigations which tempt you at every turn. One such tangential investigation that I was forced to forsake was that of the musical aspects of the Santeria cults on the island and another (and probably more important) was the ecology of this peculiar little jawless fish.

It was only when I returned to the United Kingdom that I realised quite how important my sighting had been because, search as I did, I was unable to find any references to Puerto Rican lampreys in any of the available literature either in zoological libraries or on the Internet. I spoke to some of the local people on the subject but none of them had more than the slightest inkling what I was actually talking about. This shouldn't really have surprised me because as I have noted already in these memoirs the people of Puerto Rico are not noted for their zoological knowledge.

I contacted Dean A. Hendrickson, Curator of Ichthyology at the Texas Natural History Collection (a division of Texas Memorial Museum) to see if he could help me solve the mystery of the Puerto Rican lamprey:

"Dear Sir,

I am a zoological researcher from the UK. I was in Puerto Rico earlier this year and I caught a lamprey in one of the lowland streams near Canovenas. I was unable to identify the species.

I have been unable to find a species list of Puerto Rican fishes, and I would be grateful if you could tell me what species of lampreys live on the island.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Downes
The Centre for Fortean Zoology"

One of the most fantastic things about the advent of e-mail for the fortean (or indeed any other sort of) researcher, is that it gives you almost instant access to information.

When I was writing "*The Smaller Mystery Carnivores of The Westcountry*" (1996) I was reliant on writing letters and sending them the 'old fashioned way'. In many instances this would mean a delay of two or three weeks in order to gain even a tiny and relatively unimportant piece of information. When you consider that this was usually when the letters were written to people who were not only living in the same country as me but often only within thirty miles of my house you can imagine my frustration.

The advent of The Internet has allowed almost instant access to information.

I e.mailed Dean Hendrickson at lunchtime, went out to do my weekly food shopping, and had the spark plugs on my car changed, and by the time that I returned his reply was awaiting me. It was, however not as helpful as I had hoped:

"I too don't have ready access to any "fishes of" publications for Puerto Rico, so can't help with the lamprey (I'd be interested to learn what it turns out to be, however).

I then contacted another renowned American Ichthyologist, Karsten Hartel, who replied to me:

Dear Jon:

There are no records of lamprey from the Caribbean that I know about, especially in fresh water. Was the specimen an adult? If so how big? Did you save the specimen? I'm quite sure the specimen must have been an eel of some kind.

I'm sending a copy of this to Dr. Hensley at UPR.

My reply was simple:

Hi

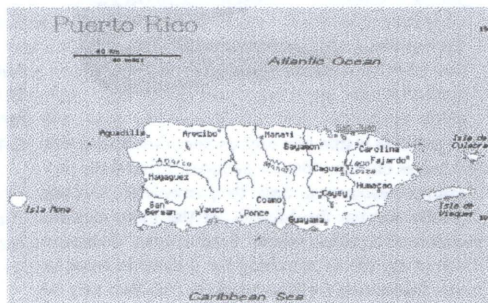
*The lamprey was an adult rather than an ammocaete. It was very similar in appearance to the European *Lampetra planeri* although a little larger. It was about seven inches in length and about half an inch thick, and olive green-brown with black eyes, a sucking, circular mouth, black eyes and a row of gill slits. I observed it sucking onto a rock in the strong current in the middle of the river.*

Unfortunately I did not secure the specimen as I did not realise that it was anything unusual. I was making a documentary for British TV on a completely unrelated subject.

I would, however, be interested in descriptions of whatever freshwater eels there are in the area, but I am certain that it was not an eel.

Jon Downes

In the absence of any other information I have to therefore conclude that the CFZ may indeed have come across a new species of animal during its sojourn on the Island of Paradise - a hitherto unsuspected species of petromyzonid. However the search amongst the internecine archives of the sacred groves of academe continues and we hope that the mystery will soon be solved. If not, it will be one of our first priorities on our return to the island, for return we are most definitely going to do.



EQUUS WILD AND BROWN

by David Barnaby

Very soon after the television broadcast of the BBC programme 'Quest for the Quagga' Reinhold Rau received an E-mail communication from a man in England. In fact, Reinhold received quite a few communications after the broadcast. This communication was slightly different from the usual in that the writer of it thought he might have photographed a Quagga in 1975.

1975; that was one startling bit. Photographed; that would be another. The Quagga had indisputably disappeared just about one hundred years before. Reinhold knew that; he is the world's Quagga expert.

The Quagga was a zebra of the extreme south of the African continent. It was one of the first big mammals to receive the impact of gun-bearing Europeans with serious intentions of staying in Africa and doing things their way. One hundred years after it was shot into extinction, Reinhold Rau, another European and long-term resident of South Africa, was doing his best to repair some of the damage. By "doing his best" I mean devoting a major part of his life to the Quagga Project. The Quagga Project is a breeding programme based at the South African Museum whose aim is to reconcentrate those Quagga genes which remain in the animal's near relatives into New Quaggas.

The Quagga Project has herds of real zebras living on real African soil and producing foals by perfectly natural means, but the fact that the Project was mentioned in *Jurassic Park* and that the Quagga itself did actually disappear gives it a certain surreal quality to those who seek only the newsworthy. Reinhold, therefore, regards the media with a certain wariness and treats claims to have seen twentieth-century Quaggas with some suspicion. There have been quite a few such claims over the years, and one, at least, was treated seriously enough to cause an exploratory expedition to be mounted. Quite reasonably, Mr Rau told the writer of the B-mail letter that what he had photographed was unlikely to be a Quagga.

The writer, a Mr Silvester, nevertheless had three photographs of an Equid which seemed to resemble quite closely the picture of the Knowsley Quaggas (c.1850) which appeared in the Radio Times, advertising the television programme. He was naturally curious to know what it was he had photographed and justifiably excited by the thought that it might be an individual Quagga throwback of some sort. The latter was unlikely but not impossible.

Mr Silvester did not claim to be an animal expert but he had lived in South Africa for fifteen years. He had had much pleasure from animal watching and had visited many game parks with his own family and visitors and with visiting businessmen whom he had taken there. It was perhaps remarkable in itself that he remembered from twenty years before taking photos that were recalled by the Radio Times picture. He remembered the incident well. In fact the three photos were divided

between himself and his father-in-law. Not only that, he remembered fairly precisely where and in what conditions the photos were taken. Such information is always crucial.

Reinhold could not help much but he passed my address to Mr Silvester. At least I lived in England. As it turned out I lived only about half an hour's drive away from Mr Silvester.

Mr Silvester's story was perfectly convincing, and by the time we had arranged to meet and project the slides, my own curiosity had been raised to a high pitch.

Mr Silvester came to my house and was immediately attracted to a large chart on the wall, showing the twenty-three existing Quagga skins, all mounted as full animals. He was anxious for me to see the pictures and I was equally anxious to see them, but we were very balanced about the whole thing. First we talked and had a cup of tea. Mr Silvester wanted to give me some background before I saw the photos; an excellent idea. He told me that the pictures were taken in what was Rhodesia at the time; in the the Kyle River district. The animal was alone at the time and living wild in a small nature reserve. He remembered that the owner of the reserve had had something to do with the training of wild animals for film appearances and the like.

We projected the first slide. There was a wild brown equid with some stripes visible. It had an alternately-coloured zebra mane and an unstriped brown rump. Those indeed are Quagga characteristics. The first photo showed the

animal in full profile. The others showed it from the back. All were clear pictures taken fairly close to the animal. What was quickly clear to me but understandably not clear to someone who, unlike me, did not suffer from Quagga obsession, was whereabouts on the animal the stripes appeared. The stripes were most obvious on the legs. Striped legs on an equid showing all those other characteristics said to me in fairly clear language; "hybrid".

At first sight, I was not willing to say whether it was a *horse x zebra* hybrid or a *donkey x zebra* hybrid, but I was fairly sure it was one of the two.

Somewhat naturally, my opinion was disappointing news to Mr Silvester. However, he himself was seeking the truth and not trying to create news I explained the reasons for my thinking and we looked at some photos of the donkey-zebra hybrids at Colohester, and at the photo of a horse x zebra hybrid living with a wild zebra herd in Namibia, in Lutz Heck's book. Between us, we even came to the conclusion that the animal was a donkey hybrid rather than a horse hybrid. Such hybrids give no indication of which parent is the zebra and which the domestic animal. We might guess, however, that since the animal was living wild it was born in the wild and so its mother would be wild, i.e. the zebra rather than the domestic.

It also occurred to me later that since the reserve owner was involved in some aspect of animal training, and therefore animal keeping, there might have been a little human influence in the breeding between the equid's parents.

I did promise to send copies of the photos to Reinhold Rau so that at least there would be a second opinion.

Reinhold found three photos interesting. Hybrids, ethically desirable or not, are always of interest to anyone interested in breeding. When he wrote back to me he said he was of the firm opinion that the animal was a donkey x zebra hybrid, with no clue as to which parent was which. Zebra hybrids, he said, were not all that rare and he knew of a few at the moment in the Cape Town area.

Horse x zebra hybrids have existed in the wild, as we have seen. Chester Zoo had a couple not all that long ago. Tim Kniveton tells me that these two were extremely spirited animals, difficult to manage. His photos of them confirm this.

So was it all for nothing? No, not really. Mr Silvester discovered what he had really photographed. The very existence of a wild-living hybrid is automatically of some zoological interest and a clear photograph of the animal is truly a bonus. Another bonus is the verifiable information about the time and location of the sighting. If only we had such information about some of the real Quaggas.

The Quagga itself has frequently been described as half horse and half zebra - which it certainly is not - and when we find an animal that really is half-and-half it is an easy step for a non-expert to think of the Quagga. Zebra hybrids in nineteenth century American circuses were actually called Quaggas.

In nineteenth-century Europe, zoologists and breeders were much more interested in breeding Quagga hybrids than in breeding Quaggas, for reasons which were economic rather than conservational. Quagga hybrids also have their place in the history of British art, genetics and the herds kept on the estates of the British aristocracy.

When Gmelin reported his contact with the Tarpan in the late eighteenth century, he described it as half horse and half ass. The confusion of unfamiliar wild animals with half-and-half creatures has a long, almost respectable, history.

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Putting In An Appearance

by Neil Arnold

This is a brief file, in reference to a few appearances, they could be deemed, " . . . a turn up for the books!"

Although many strange, and out-of-place animals have showed up in the rural shroud of Kent, there are just a few that I have not covered, and I'm pretty sure that this will always be the case.

Most of these 'animals' seem to be of this plain and these include big cats, large insects and others which I have mentioned in previous articles, most of these having been featured in "Animals & Men I have felt, or believed, that in the past there may

have been a misidentification between the spectral black dogs and the out-of-place big cats. Of course, it sounds as though I am questioning the witnesses awareness, but I often think that as the big-cat situation was not as widespread in the '60s, '70s and even early '80s, especially in Kent, that maybe folk were seeing big cats but putting it down as giant hounds.

I know that a majority of people know what they are seeing in the '70s a phantom black dog was sighted, on a dark lane at Sevenoaks. However, I wonder how many people have actually mistook large 'hounds' ? Who knows, maybe nowadays people are still seeing these enormous canines but instead are labelling them as big cats. Whilst hunting for the local beastly big cat I accidentally caught another out-of-place creature on film, without even realising it.

In January of '98 I dodged the divots at Blue Bell Hill and tried to hold my camera steady, hoping to catch a glimpse of a mystery predator. Instead, I captured, and very shakily (rather Roger Patterson-like) a peculiar green bird.

It fluttered from nowhere, about twenty-five metres away and settled on a dirt path, between two thickets. I walked towards it, almost breaking my ankle, and

the bird remained in view. Although it seemed an unusual bird I was not excited about it, but I filmed it because I'd not seen one before.

A few days later an article appeared in a local newspaper asking, 'HAVE YOU SEEN THE GREEN ALIEN ?'. The feature was in reference to the unusual bird I'd actually filmed.

Apparently, the birds are parakeets, originating from West Africa and India, the size of collared doves and enjoy screaming like children in a playground. The birds are also known for their acrobatic flying and of course, their colour.

I immediately contacted the local paper, who I'd already been in touch with regarding the big cats.

There are indeed a few thousand of these 'foreigners' fluttering around Kent, a majority of them preferring to roost on shopping centres, probably mistaking them for the Taj Mahal.

Since my original sighting, I have twice more seen the birds, proving that they are probably the most common out-of-place animal to roam this county.

The flying squirrels of Kent have to indeed be one of the most fascinating, yet elusive creatures. My most detailed account, which also appeared in an issue of Fortean Times, occurred in Tatsfield. It was here that a motorist, upon coming around a bend of a country lane, saw a grey creature fly across in front of the car and land on a tree opposite.

The witness thought it was a bird until he approached.

He describes it; "The front and rear limbs of the creature appeared to be joined by a flap of skin and it floated and clung to the bark. I couldn't believe what I was seeing but I actually saw the animal again, although on the other side of Tatsfield. I don't know if it was the same creature."

In Pakistan these creatures have only been rumoured to exist. *Eupetaurus cinereus* was originally discovered the Himalayan regions in 1888, and one of the last official sightings occurred in the mid 1920s. In 1994 researchers believed they had found a front paw of the creature but the rumours were confirmed when a female was allegedly captured in the Sai Valley, in Pakistan. It

was apparently let go after examination. It measured two-feet in height, bore a two-foot long tail and has a piercing scream.

For a creature to be so scarce in its 'native' country is an enigma itself, but to appear in a place such as Kent is a bewildering mystery, and yet the witness, who saw the creature twice, can not be questioned. There are certainly not many British animals that can be mistaken for a flying squirrel. Any theories ?

Another case concerning rare creatures of their homeland turning up in equally strange places, occurred in the early '70s when a 'Tasmanian wolf' was sighted, on a couple of occasions around the Lympe area.

The beast was seen in car headlights and described as being, "*... bigger than a dog, yellowish in colour and bearing stripes.*"

Maybe the beast was a tiger, but there were, and have not been any reports of escaped tigers, or captured tigers and considering this sort of game is more of a threat to man, I find the story somewhat strange.

However, the striped creature was seen again in the '70s and again described as being "*...grey and yellow and striped.*"

The RSPCA were called out to examine foot-indentations and confirmed the presence of a mystery creature. An animal that has failed to appear again, some twenty-years later.

We can not rule out the possibility of bizarre cases of out-of-place animals, but the likelihood of such an existence seems frail, in comparison to other creatures. Of course, big cats do roam Britain, but the few cases of mystery bears, bison, tigers and alligators seem to fade. Many of these files remain unsolved but attract more scepticism due to their brief appearances and lack of consistency.

Not anywhere near bizarre is the re-emergence of the Maid Of Kent beetle, which Dr. Karl Shuker reported on in Fortean Times. The one-inch long beetle was last officially reported back in 1950 but in 1997 made an appearance at an Isle Of Sheppey sanctuary lavatory. The creature, which resembles a

golden-haired bee was thought to have become extinct in the mid-'60s, but I have obtained a handful of reports of these insects since then. However, insects are not as easy to find or see, even if they are native to this country. Big cats may be elusive and not of this country but there is more chance of seeing one of them, even if a Maid Of Kent beetle lived in your garden. The insect world hides a billion secrets, many will remain untold forever.

However, in the case of the 1997 find, the warden who spotted the creature, reared it in the winter months before letting it go. My final two cases are of contrasting emotion, one being rather mysteriously sad, the other uplifting in an adventurous way.

The local Wildlife Trust has become alarmed at finding a small number of dead otters in the county, particularly in Sevenoaks. One of these corpses being found near the railway line.

The strange thing, or even stranger should I say, is the fact that otters are increasingly rare in Kent, even to the extent where investigators have almost dismissed their existence. So, where are they coming from and how are they dying ? Well, I plan to investigate the mystery further, hoping to find out cause of death.

If these animals have not come from far, then there is proof that Kent does have a minor population, or as the case may be... *did* have a population.

I don't think there is even a one-in-billion chance that a mammoth could be lurking in Kent's wild Weald. However, it seems as though many of the creatures remains are entombed in the bed of the River Medway. Indeed, the Medway area holds many secrets just waiting to be discovered.

I contacted the Maidstone Museum who believe that many Ice Age mammals await discovery. "*It is a rich area for many remains, especially those of the mammoth*", said a spokesman.

"It is a huge valley. The sea level was lower 13, 000 years ago than it is today and since it has risen remains have been buried."

There is a geology group currently scouring the area in search of remains, many of the members have hunted for fossils for more than twenty years.

One said: "If you know where to look there are many remains to be found. just beach combing proves to be productive."

In the past Kent has revealed many startling discoveries, one of these being a fossil skeleton of an iguanodon, which was found in a Maidstone quarry. The discovery was the only one of its kind in England and the bones are now on display in London's Natural History Museum.

Other expeditions and fossil-hunts have also been of great worth. In 1911, a 50,000 year-old elephant was discovered at Upnor marshes, near Oatham's historic Dockyard. The Royal Engineers were practising digging trenches when they found the twelve-foot skeleton.

Rather oddly, the prehistoric iguanodon appears as one of the creatures displayed on Maidstone's coat of arms

So, if the mammoth remains are being dug up so many years later, what are the chances of someone finding remains of a big cat? 'Experts' often find it strange that remains of big cats and Bigfoot are not found, however, imagine how confused researchers would be now if in prehistoric times there had been 'out-of-place' creatures? Just think, way ahead in the future some poor expedition is going to find a puma skeleton in Kent and be extremely baffled.'

And finally... an unusual piece of nature, which may have appealed to Charles Fort, took place in 1948 when South Kent was besieged by an unusual large number of rooks. Many fields of crops were damaged, especially on the Romney Marshes, when the descending black hordes invaded from France.

The plague was increasingly bizarre, almost abnormal, as it took over the area. The National Farmers Union assembled to organise shooting parties, but such was the number of the enemy, that they gave up without any knowledge of how to combat them.

The ravaging rooks came over daily from their native land and the scenario probably made Hitchcock's "The Birds" seem cute in comparison.

Much weirdness in the Weald.

CLINTON'S COGITATIONS

BY CLINTON KEELING

Yes, I know - criticising the work of others can be equated with destroying an instrument one hasn't the skill to use, but I'm not criticising - I'm making comments. In any case, from the now far-off days of my childhood, the value and importance of "how others see us" was firmly instilled into me.

Right, here goes...

I was going to congratulate all concerned on the new appearance and production of "Animals and Men" - but then I found a word missed out and three spelling errors in my own "Cogitations". Come on, gentlemen, you can do better than that.

I've always had a high degree of respect for Chris Moiser, but this time he's really excelled himself, with his photograph on the cover as he's achieved one of two remarkable feats - either a) that the camera can indeed lie, or b) he not only came face to face with but for once got a good photograph of an unknown animal. I mean look at it: the "British Wolverine" be damned - any twelve year-old interested in animals could see it is a Badger with the head of a Lemur: go on, look at it again...

I was sorry to read, in the account of the Giant Squid (p.4), that damned word "transportation" - I mean, what the blue blazes is wrong with just "transport" in that context?. It's on a par with talking about water being "acidic" when acid is meant, or "causation" for cause or going on about "a garden situation" or "a class-room situation" - when all is really necessary is just "garden" or "class-room". It's just pointless affectation and, I believe, of trans-Atlantic origin.

On the following page the "Lake Iliamna Monster" sounds rather like a Pilot Whale (Globiocephalus). Certainly the "water squirting" suggests a Cetacean.

Most interesting, by the way, to hear it was reported in the "Bristol Bay Times", as here's an extra bit of Fortean for you. This bay in Alaska is so-called because very occasionally a mirage is seen far out to sea of some large city and it's believed to be Bristol, here in England.

Say what you like about Keeling - he might be an egotistic braggart (although, to be fair, someone once said it was justified) but he does come up with some interesting things.

I wouldn't get too upset about there being only an estimated five hundred New Guinea Singing Dogs left, as - aberrant cries apart - physiologically they are one and the same as the Dingo of Australia. I kept the latter species, and bred it, for many years, and when some N.G.S.D.s were brought into this country in the 1960s I had the chance of examining them closely. There's no difference, believe me.

On p.9 someone is confusing the blundering, harmless Emu with the Cassowary - the only bird potentially dangerous to Man. Why oh why, I continually, and pointlessly, ask myself will people persist in showing their ignorance by making erroneous assertions of this sort, rather than ask someone who knows?

Regarding "The Onza Which Ain't" (p.11), our revered and respected (the two are not necessarily synonymous) Editor virtually apologises for having said words to the effect "I told you so" - although I cannot think why, as the only people likely to take offence at this extremely mild admonition are those who've been stupidly obstinate and wouldn't be "said", to use a very apt northern term.

I do think that's a bloody silly term - "not a million miles from..." (p.16) as it might come as rather a shock to Mr. Crowther to learn that nowhere on earth is a million miles from anywhere else - or indeed anything like it.

I nominate the comment on p.35 - "The present Lord Strathmore knows nothing about the monster presumably because the creature was dead when he

reached his majority" - as one of the daftest that's ever appeared in "A&M" - and that's against some pretty stiff competition.

I mean, dammit, the English Civil War took place before I reached my majority, as also did the Black Death, the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway and the Jack the Ripper murders - but I could write a lengthy article on any of them. Sorry, but I just don't see the "reasoning" behind this outlook. Do you?

On the previous page, headed "The editorial team...have done their best" (in fact it should be "has done its best!") there's a lovely bit of tautology in "11 p.m. at night". Come on, wake up at the back there - why add "at night" to 11 p.m.? I'm beginning to think it's time I was on the board too.

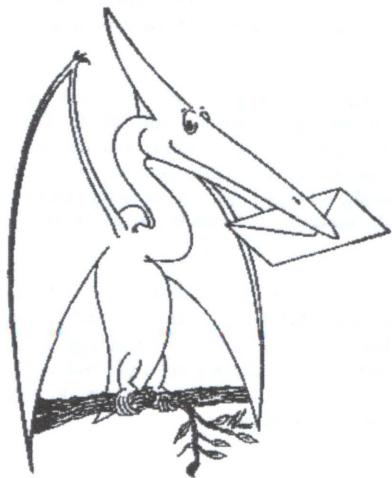
Thank you, most sincerely, Nigel Wright, for putting "rendering" on p.38 and not this horrible, damnable, Yankee "rendition" that everyone (apart, seemingly, from thee and me) uses now.

Jonathan, old son, why didn't you drop me a line or give me a ring when you were working on Issue 17, and tell me you wanted some information on "Pelorus Jack" (p.41) - which would have saved you all the trouble of putting the matter out to tender in the way you did.

He was a Risso's Dolphin who, in the closing years of the last century, seemed to take a delight in swimming and leaping in front of steamers going through Pelorus Sound, New Zealand as though acting as a pilot. After several years of never failing to do this he suddenly disappeared - officially he'd been injured and subsequently died, after being hit by a ship's screw - although this doesn't sound very likely as he always leaped along by the bows.

There is still a story that someone went aboard a ship as a passenger but with the intent ion - either for a wager or for "sport" or out of sheer criminal tendencies - of killing Jack when he appeared, by shooting him. Which is what he did - although I'm pleased to say that afterwards the crew didn't exactly say to him "good shot, old chap", if you get my meaning.

* * * * *



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor and his band of merry men welcome an exchange of correspondence on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters and would like to stress that opinions voiced are those of the individual correspondent rather than being necessarily those of the editorial team or the Centre for Fortean Zoology. Every attempt is made not to infringe anyone's moral rights or copyright, and we apologise if we have unwittingly done so.

A NOISE ANNOYS

Dear Jon,

Richard King forwarded this to me today, can any body help? It kind of sounds like rifle fire at first, but then he seems to know about the outdoors, and

describes it as electrical. It sounds like it is coming from an animal, as it does move. Here it is:

Several years ago, probably around 1990 in February, very cold weather, I came home from work after midnight (I often work as the night librarian here). I parked my car in front of my house, which is in a very rural area with a six acre woods about 50 feet from the front door.

There are fields around the woods and no houses for about a ¼ mile or so. My dog kept barking, which is strange for him, and barking at the edge of the woods. I thought nothing of this, and walked from my car to the house when I heard the sound. All I can say is that is sounded like a very amplified electronic noise, and it went like this, phonetically: "BZZZ-SSSSSS-TTTT BZZZ-SSSSSS-TTTT BZZZZ-SSSSSS-TTTT CLACK CLACK CLACK!"

This repeated about every minute or two and the dog went nuts. At first I thought an electric transformer had blown or something like that, and it sounded amplified because it came from far away, like one hundred yards or so.

I thought of everything, like could this be some teenager coyote hunters (at midnight!) trying to call them in with some strange device, I thought of animals, like buck deer fighting or a buck knocking his antlers against a tree; perhaps a bizarre water bird off course.

Well, I got my wife and she heard it, too, and it seemed angry at the dog's barking and the sound seemed to move around the woods gradually in a small area. I didn't have a flashlight that worked. After an hour I heard it no longer; it made the noise about every minute to about every 5 minutes and gradually stopped and we went in. The next day, in daylight, I checked around the area for tracks, etc., but found none. It was rather frightening and strange, and no one has ever been able to tell us anything.

If you have any suggestions or have heard of anything like this, please give me your ideas. UFO? Who knows? This is a quick description of the noise, and I'd appreciate any help on your part and am interested in your comments. Have you heard anything like this?

BradLaGrange

Ain't life a bitch: just when
you think you have
discovered a means of
making pots of money your,
goose goes and buggers off!
Or,
Your "golden cat" goes
walkabout.

Dear A&M,

As I reported in the last edition of A&M, I was involved in the trial by media of Mr. Mike Thomas of Newquay Zoo and his video footage of the "Beast" of Bodmin (NOT).

Several days after the event I got a very strange phone call from Anonymous John, (video camera operator extra-ordinaire) he was not a happy bunny. The feeling I got from analysing his vitriolic attack, was, not that he was upset over the mugging that Mr. Thomas had received, no, but that it was entirely my fault that he had not made any money out of his video footage. Not a brass farthing let alone the many thousands of pound that he had anticipated.

An hour into the two hour phone call Anonymous John started to ask questions, dealing with his quest to capture the elusive "Beast" on film. Then he came out with the most astounding statement I have ever heard: "expenditure is no problem". It appears that Anonymous John was/is convinced that he will be able to recoup any expenditure through sales of his pictures, and still make a handsome profit. (So much for his statements at the press conference about helping Mr. Thomas in his "non" money-making quest for the Beast.)

If he follows my advice as to what photographic hardware to buy, I don't think Anonymous John will be making much of a profit, as he would have to pay at least ten grand for the camera kit I described to him as 'minimum' requirements ! Ha ! Ha !. Somewhere in Devon or Cornwall there is a Nikon

or Canon retailer who thinks that Christmas came in the middle of July this year.

For those of you who follow the Beast of Bodmin stories you may know that myself and Mr. Pompous or Mr. Arrogant (depending on your point of view), scragged the *Cornish Guardian* and their Beast pictures at the beginning of the year. Well, this month there was a letter from the Anonymous "snapper" of those pictures, defending Mr. Thomas against those doubters, and attacking horrible people who don't believe in the beast.

Anonymous Snapper pledged himself to obtaining photographic proof of the Beasts existence and backed his statement by writing that he had obtained far superior photographic equipment than he had previously used, with this new equipment he was convinced that the proof needed was imminent.

It is ironic to say the least, that these two independent Anonymous Gentlemen with their new expensive, better cameras have now had, in the case of one ten months and in the other three months to come up with the goods, and, we haven't seen a single new image published!

Perhaps the Beast is having the last laugh and definitive proof of its existence will come in the shape of a photograph taken on a 1970's Kodak Instamatic, by a little old biddy who has been feeding "The Beast" cod heads at her farm in the back of beyond for the last twenty years!

PS If you want to make money in Cornwall - open a Camera shop that sells top of the range Nikons or Canons and the most expensive telephoto lenses they make, I'll send these would be "Beast" snappers to you. As Barnum said - "There is a sucker born every minute"

PPS - An interesting development, in the new intake of students this year one of them has a friend who "knows where the Beast is"!!

Keep snapping, who knows one day your Beast may come.

Best wishes

Paul Crowther

FLEXING YOUR MUSSELS

Dear Jon,

You all recall what a horrible time we of the Great Lakes region are having with this zebra mussel problem. You may all also recall that I live near Lake Winnebago which in Indian means "Lake Stinking Waters." Apparently some of the little critters have been found in this wonderful lake I have the pleasure of living near. Well, my next door neighbor, who happens to be the big DNR water guru around here, has announced that should the zebra mussels take hold in Lake Winnebago, we can expect it to "improve" the water quality. So ain't that a slick twist?

PS... Lets hope the sturgeon like em.

Felinda Bullock, Wisconsin

THE WORM TURNS

Dear Jon,

I have never put this story in print, but have discussed it with several biologists of whom I have worked with, and none could come up with any definition of the animal I am about to describe. Personally I believe it may be a known species, but I have dug through lots of books trying to find it, to no avail.

During the Spring of 1978, Corey Rudolph and I were camping out in the mountains dividing the Mojave Desert and Los Angeles, and following up on Sasquatch reports nearby. One morning, as we were walking around in the high desert which was still slightly snow covered, we came upon something wiggling in the snow near a little creek. Upon closer examination we saw that it was a worm of some sort, and we began to dig it out of the snow. Once in hand, it immediately coiled up into a tight ball, and now appeared more like some sort of wire. As we felt it we noticed it was very stiff, and could not be forced to recoil. Its body was maybe 5 mm in diameter and about 9 inches long when fully outstretched. It was brown in color, and its head was an abrupt stump with what looked like the ball from a ball pen at the end. It had no eyes or anything, just a wire-like body with a ball-

pen mouth. In fact, we weren't even sure it was a mouth at all. It also had no apparent anus. I took it home and kept it in a small tupperware bowl of water for about 3 months, and fed it nothing. It remained alive, and would stretch-out in the bowl, but coil again if touched. After three months we decided to take it back to the same area, and release it. We searched the libraries and called several "worm" experts, none of which had ever heard of this species. All books on worms were without this one.

Whatever it was, it never died in our captivity, without food of any sort. It was released in a small creek and simply drifted away in the current. To this day, I have no idea what it was, but we decided to name it the "Rudolph-Trapp Snow Worm." I don't expect any of you to have heard of such a thing, but if you have, I'd like to know about it.

Sincerely,

Douglas E. Trapp - Dallas, Texas

GULO AND GULLIBLE

Letters to the Editor.

At first glance at the cover of A&M17 I thought, "muddy badger". Reading the caption, I thought, "No, it damned well isn't". Given the indistinct nature of the print, undefined depth of field, perspective, etc it was still a muddy badger, no question.

The lack of evidence for the wolverines existence in Scotland and probably also Wales is overwhelming.

The numbers required for a viable population composed of solitary animals would seem to preclude the escapee theory. It is not impossible that some misguided control freak, finding his Barratt semi inadequate for, say a Bengal tiger, downsized to a wolverine. Possible, yes. Likely, somewhat less so.

To extend Lever's idea that its most likely purpose here would be as a pet, limits its presence here even more. Ferret fanciers apart, the mustelidae does not possess the "aah factor" to such an extent to make it appeal to humans. Even hand-reared wolverines tend to revert rather dramatically. Next door's poodle could be put down to natural wastage. a shortage of primary school children would be less easily explained.

But its main failure factor as a pet is its intrinsic lack of "glam". It's one thing exercising the clouded leopard on the common, but there is little kudos being seen leading something that brings forth cries of "Hey mister, that's an ugly bugger of a dog you've got." As a fashion it's sadly lacking. As an exercise in machismo it's a disaster, as hardly anyone would know what it was, thus missing the point of the studded collar and its owner's plethora of tattoos. This would lead to the owner being ambushed by small boys and "badgered" with mammalian-related questions.

Which brings us back to the reason for all this demented supposition, wishful thinking and general myopia from a thankfully miniscule minority of the cryptid orientated population. Possible litigation prevents me "outing" these sad souls, but if ever there comes a petition to provide nest boxes for tooth fairies, just check the first few names. Despite its enormous implications I can exclusively reveal that muddy badgers do exist. I have seen them. Red badgers also exist, these I have also seen, admittedly rarely.

On a windswept cliff top on the northeast coast of Scotland stand the ruins of Dunnottar Castle where once was hidden the crown jewels of Scotland. (Yes, we have a set as well.) The ground surrounding this stately edifice looks like any arable farmland, until you plough it. It comes up brick red and so do the local badgers. Given the requisite rainfall, more than adequate hereabouts. This is not a sub-species, this is mud we're talking.

The landed gentry of Kincardine were (perhaps still are) the Arbuthnots. In common with other younger sons of the nobility, knowing his elder brother would inherit, George John took himself off to Canada around 1850 to work for the Hudson Bay Company.

As was common for the time, on his return home he wrote his memoirs, the usual sort of Victorian colonial jingoism that should be shunned like the plague. Apart from one small paragraph. G. J. was a "sportsman" - that is he killed for pleasure, so he had a basic knowledge of natural history and game.

His "Notes and Observations gathered in Our North West Territories" mentions an encounter with what he thought was a badger, shot by his guide. This

was, of course the first "glutton" he'd encountered and he explained his mistake by the corpse being almost the same colour as his native local badgers back in Scotland.

Always hard to disprove a negative, it's even harder to deal with the awesome gullibility that leaves you shaking your head at the shortfall in rationality on seemingly obvious explanations of natural phenomena.

Chris Moiser was mouthing logical, reasoned sense. The utterances of some others emanated from an orifice facing a different direction. entirely.

Yours,
Tom Anderson - Aberdeen

SCIENCE: THE BIG STICK?

As well as being interested in the discovery of new species, I support organisations that seek protection of currently-threatened ones - like Minke whales.

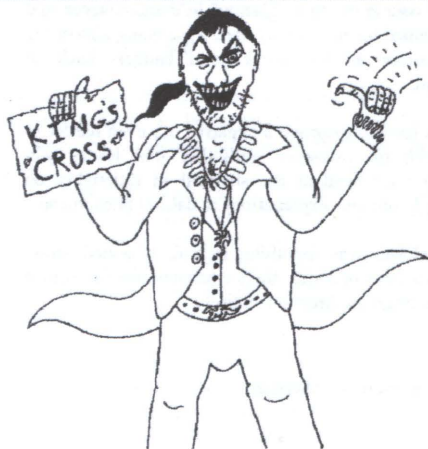
Japan has an active whaling fleet and has been hunting and killing Minke under the guise of "scientific research" for years - although most of the meat ends up in restaurants rather than test-tubes.

A large area around Antarctica was designated in 1994 as a whale sanctuary, by the International Whaling Commission. It now appears that Japanese whalers have extended their "research" programme to this area too! The pro-whaling organisation *Breach* say that the Japanese whalers often try to avoid "quick kill" explosive harpoons, and prefer traditional lances, to avoid destroying valuable flesh.

Additionally, *Breach* have alleged that some of the whale meat is used in school catering, to foster the taste for whale meat amongst the kids, in the hope that they will become paying consumers later.

I wonder if these children will grow up with the notion that "scientific research", wanton inflicting of pain, and gratuitous self-indulgence of desire are all synonymous? Such notions are not unknown in human history. A new New World Order beckons?

Steve Johnson, Wolverhampton.



WHAT'S AFOOT

by Richard Freeman

In the last issue, Nigel Wright reported on the Fortean Times Unconvention. Whilst mentioning our editors' talk he didn't mention mine! Well, since this is my column, I'll just have to blow my own trumpet: I lectured about dragons at the '98 Unconvention and it went down a storm, so there!

Cryptozoology certainly seems to be the flavour of the month with TV producers; and the long-awaited *X-Creatures* finally appeared. I was expecting a *Life on Earth* style series with a huge budget and immaculate research - God, was I ever wrong! Let's take an episode by episode look at this series....

* One of the most likely cryptids, the yeti, featured in the first programme. After briefly interviewing a few native witnesses and walking a few hundred feet up a mountain presenter Chris Packham concludes that there is not enough food above the snowline to sustain a giant ape. Yetis live in the mountain heights - *ergo*, no yetis. Anyone with even a passing interest in the yeti will know they live in the valleys below the snowline, in forests of bamboo, rhododendron, and assorted semi-tropical plants.

Other areas with recent sightings such as western China are totally ignored. The main thing that sticks in

my mind is the Sherpa woman's tearful recount of a yeti that killed her yaks and tossed her into a river in 1974. The animal was probably more interested in her livestock and she was merely in the way (genuine unprovoked yeti attacks are very rare: see my article "The Bigfoot Murders" in *A&M* 14) but the incident still obviously frightened her 24 years later! What did Packham think she saw, a monkey?

When he is talking to a white person with a few letters after their name, Packham's attitude seemed to change to one of fawning acceptance. A case in point was his behaviour towards Debbie Martyr (I actually believe that Debbie saw an unknown primate, but that is not the point). Because she is a professional he was willing to accept *her* testimony but not that of natives who live cheek-by-jowl with the animals in question.

* The next programme featured the giant squid, no longer a cryptid but definitely still a monster. The main problem I had with this episode was the recounting of the sighting of J.D. Starkey from an Admiralty trawler off the Maldives. In his original testimony Starkey matches the kraken's length to that of the ship: 175 feet +. In the show, the ship's length is cut to 60 feet! Why is this? - did the natural history unit balk at the idea of a 175 foot squid?

* The Loch Ness monster programme was probably the high point of the series. Sightings are, they say, natural phenomena misinterpreted due to expectation, coupled with sightings of giant sturgeon. I agree up to a point, but there is a hardcore of sightings less easy to dismiss. In particular the very clear land sightings. Packham's dismissal of the Spicer case as a couple of otters is pitifully inadequate.

Megalania prisca survival is also dismissed after a brief talk with one palaeontologist and an interview with a couple who saw a big "goanna" (much too small to be *Megalania*). The Frank Gorden encounter is not even mentioned - is the great dragon of Oz too contentious, even when a qualified herpetologist sees it?

* Bigfoot was the episode that caused the biggest kerfuffle: Sasquatch groups the world over raged at Packham's dismissal of their icon. His attempt to recreate the Patterson footage is laughable, with a costume that would shame Star Trek, as was his assertion that the animal behaved unnaturally by calmly walking away from two very close humans. Actually I

have seen film of wild gorillas acting in exactly the same manner. Native testimony was once again tossed aside in a cavalier fashion!

* British big cats were next up, even the *X-Creatures* couldn't deny these. The assertion that they are not breeding however is highly questionable. Given a puma's lifespan in captivity is around 17 years and considerably less in the wild, they and other species must be breeding. They have been seen consistently since the sixties so unless there is a mad animal-releaser turning them free every few years, this is a foregone conclusion.

The reconstruction at the start of this episode was highly alarmist, showing a man being killed by the beast of Exmoor. This tone continues through out the programme commenting on attacks by pumas in America. The area of California in question has had an explosion in puma numbers coupled with human encroachments on their habitat. This is not a concern in Britain where there are probably only 200 or so at large.

* The final programme dealt with an animal that I am 100% sure still exists: the thylacine. Film taken in 1973 on mainland Australia was shown, which I had not seen before - but despite looking convincing at first, it was almost certainly a feral dog or fox with mange. Packham concludes that thylacines might still exist on Tasmania but not on the mainland. Most promising mainland areas like Queensland were ignored as were the compelling accounts from New Guinea. It was speculated that a thylacine pup preserved in alcohol may one day be used to clone new specimens.

In conclusion: cringe-inducing pap! From start to finish, this whole series of *The X Creatures* was a cavalcade of base errors and appalling arrogance, which I would sum up as pitifully bad film-making.

* * * * *

National Geographic ran a far superior documentary on the giant squid: after examining the legends and historic accounts it followed Dr Clyde Roper's attempt to film the squid by attaching a "crittercam" to the back of a sperm whale, his target's only predator. Sadly, the lord of the deep remained elusive, but new insights into whale

behaviour, such as vertical sleeping, were discovered.

* * * * *

MAMMOTH RECREATION

Equinox recently ran a programme about a Japanese scientist hoping to re-create the mammoth. Having perfected a technique of fertilising eggs with dead sperm, he now hopes to use mammoth sperm on a female Asian elephant. The odds seem stacked against him. Firstly he must find a male mammoth with intact genitals. Then, there is no guarantee the sperm and egg will be compatible. Elephants don't sexually mature until around 17 and are very slow reproducers - hence even with exceptional luck it could take 50 years of back-breeding to get one specimen. Still, I wish him all the luck in the world.

LINKS

Web Sites of cryptozoological or fortean interest

Our CFZ web site can be found at <http://www.eclipse.co.uk/cfz> and is currently undergoing some pretty hefty reorganisation to give it a properly professional appearance. By the time you read this, the new version should be up and running - and well worth checking out!

As always, feedback is always welcome - say, if you spot a typo. Or, if you want to send £10,000 as a token of your esteem...

OTHER SITES

The information below is for guidance only: web-sites may change or close without our knowing!

www.planet13.co.uk/earthly/EarthlyDelights.htm (Earthly Delights) looks at Bodmin Moor: its terrestrial zodiac, big cats and celtic stones

Brian Goodwin's site at <http://freespace.virgin.net/brian.goodwin/> includes big cats, serpents, dragons, Nessie, and news from Fortean Cumbria.

The English version of Michel Raynal's Virtual Institute of Cryptozoology service at <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/cryptozoo/welcome.htm> is now being developed - with text and pics

Ben Roesch's site is at <http://www.ncf.carleton.ca/~bz050/> which includes the "Cryptozoology On The Internet" list of sites, a sub-page of Ben's, which can be found at <http://www.ncf.carleton.ca/~bz050/HomePage.czli nks.html>

BOOK REVIEWS

The Flight of Dragons

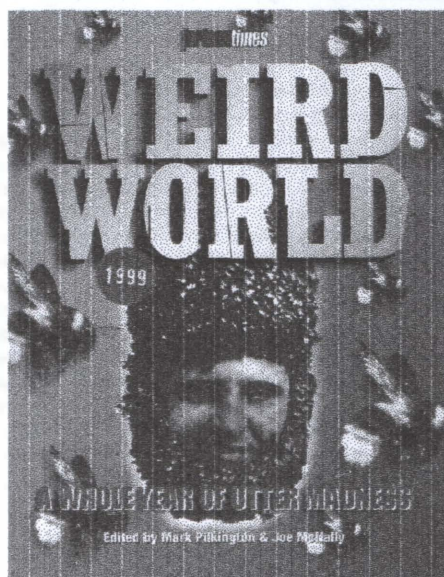
Peter Dickinson. Paper Tiger £13.99
Large format ,134pp. ISBN 1 85028 411 3

A soft-back re-print of the original 1979 classic of cryptozoology. Dickinson's theory runs that dragons were a direct descendent of *Tyrannasaurus rex*, that flew and spat fire by manipulation of hydrogen gas. Sumptuously illustrated by Wayne Anderson, this is a totally captivating book. I think dragons were supernatural creatures rather than flesh & blood but this is still one of my all-time favourite books.

- Richard Freeman

This book combines fact with fantasy and science with romance, and looks at the folklore aspects as well as discussing a possible mating and evolutionary cycle. Some of the suggestions are pretty bizarre, eg, "flight was achieved by a controlled digestion of parts of the bone structure." An entertaining read, though

- Graham Inglis



Weird World 1999

(Fortean Times) John Brown Publishing, London.
£8.99 96pp

This large format book is colourful in both senses of the word. Divided into sections, it contains mini-features and news round-ups in various categories of "weirdness" - the human world, animals, paranormal, and the natural world, and also has "shorts" from various geographical regions - eg. the Strange Asia map with little boxes of text scattered around it. The subjects cover the normal *Fortean Times* gamut, and include Lionel Fanthorpe's Top 10 Mysteries (including the haunted Ford Capri), the "blobs" washed up on the Tasmanian coast, the CFZ's Chupacabra hunt in Mexico, a gallery of nice crop circles, how to make your own crop circle, that Martian "face", tales of inept crime (some really are extraordinarily inept), and strange deaths. A fun read.

And, may I take this opportunity to say that the current "CFZ-mobile", a Ford *Cortina*, is haunted by nothing more than bits of rubbish like old Coke cans and empty cigarette packets... - Graham Inglis

MAGAZINES

DEAD OF NIGHT

A4 62pp £2. Lee Walker, 156 Bolton Road East, New Ferry, Merseyside, L62 4RY

Masses of info including strange news stories, superstitions and conspiracy theories. probably in pole position as a worthy rival - or complement - to *The Fortean Times*...

THE CRYPTOZOOLOGY REVIEW

166 Pinewood Ave, Toronto, M6C 2V5, Canada

Summer 1998's Review includes crypto news (somewhat obscurely described by Ben Roesch as "all the latest cryptozoology news fit to print"), and three articles: how big does the Giant Squid get, underwater panthers - what the Mississippi "piasa" pictographs depict, and part 3 of sea serpent carcasses. The next issue should be out by now.

EXOTIC ZOOLOGY

3405 Windjammer Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80920, USA. Quarterly. \$10 US, \$13 non-US.

Matthew Bille's 8pp mag looks at the more prozaic end of cryptozoology (rather than the fortan and "ghost animals" area).

The Nov/Dec issue looks at reports of coelacanths in the Indian Ocean, debunks Packham's *The X Creatures* Sasquatch treatment in much the same way as Richard does in *this* magazine (p.40), and has a brief roundup of news and comment.

MAINLY ABOUT ANIMALS

A5 32pp Quarterly. Subscrip: £5 per year. C. Keeling, 13 Pound Place, Shalford, Guildford, Surrey, GU4 8HH.

Zoological articles and news, edited by Clinton

Keeling, also a contributor to *Animals & Men* - see pp 34-35 of this issue for his latest "Cogitations"...

COVER UP

SUPR (Scottish Unexplained Phenomena Research) A4 magazine 12pp £1.25 from David Colman, 49 Limefield Cres., Bathgate, WL, Scotland EH48 1RF

Scottish ufologists co-operate (or sometimes don't) to find out who's covering up what.

PORCUPINE!

Kadoorie Farm, Lam Kam Road, Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong.

40pp A4 newsletter from the Dept of Ecology and Biodiversity, University of Hong Kong. Covers South China as well as HK, with news on animal conservation / distribution studies / rehab programmes / rescue, roundups of sightings, and book reviews. Issue 17 also features South China's three shrews.

ERAS NEWSLETTER

Essex Reptiles & Amphibians Society, 1 Thyme Rd, Tiptree, Essex.

A monthly 24pp "member's newsletter" in A5 booklet form. The intro, by 'snakecharmer', comments, "I have never known such a quiet month. You really are being either very careful or very secretive." However, there *are* articles, ads for exotic pets - and their food ("cheap squeaks!" proclaims one ad...), breeding reports, and forthcoming shows and events.

MAGONIA

£1.25 John Rimmer, 5 James Tce, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW14 8HB

Magonia's been running for nearly 30 years now, and is still seeking to "interpret contemporary vision and belief", mainly in the UFO/Fortean areas. A mag that doesn't pull its punches.

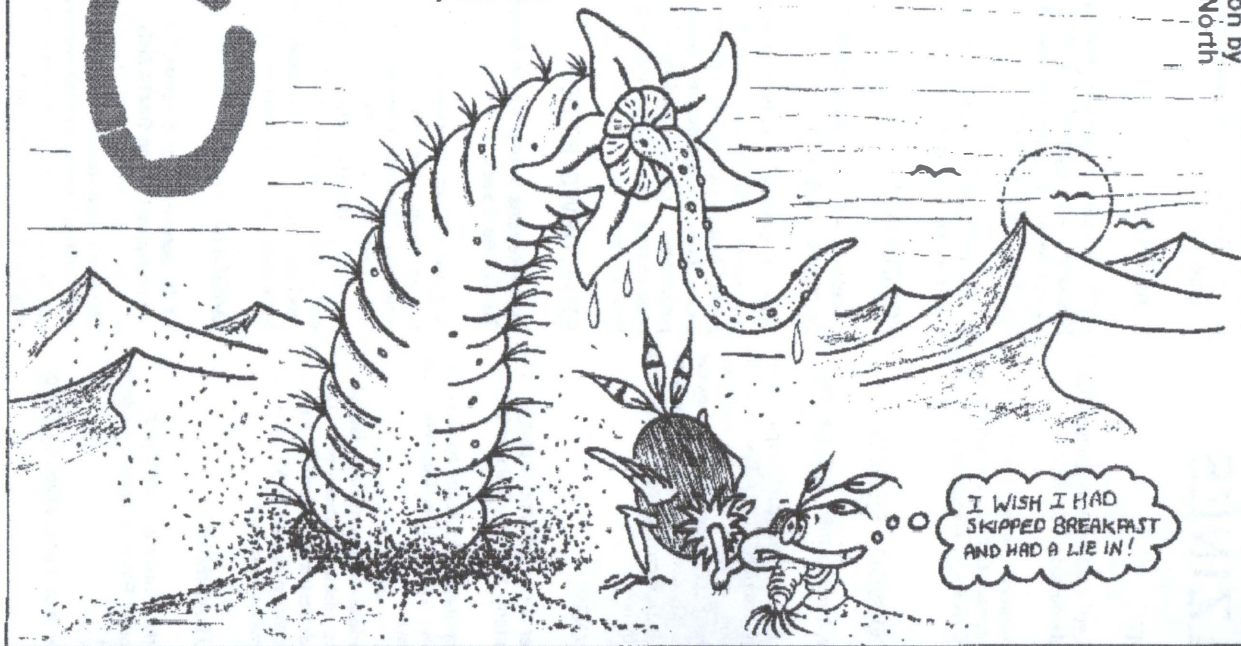
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THE

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CRYPTOZOOLOGY FILES

by Mark North



LOCATION: The Gobi Desert, Mongolia.

TIME : 04.45 am

AS DAWN BREAKS OVER THE GOBI DESERT THE EARLY BIRD
ACCIDENTALLY CATCHES THE MONGOLIAN DEATH WORM

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3 Giant Worm in Eastbourne, Lake Monsters of New Guinea, Giant Lizards in Papua, Mystery Cats, Black Dogs on Dartmoor, Scorpion Mystery.

4 Manatees of St Helena, Migo: The Lake Monster of New Britain, The search for the Tasmanian Thylacine.

5 Mystery cats, Loch Ness, More on the "Migo Video", Boars and Pumas, The Hairy Hands of Dartmoor.

6 The Owlman Special; also the Humped Elephants of Nepal, Mystery Cats, Sabre-toothed cats, Mysterious hominids of Africa, The British Nandi Bear?, Bibliography of Cryptozoology books part 1 (by Dr Karl Shuker).

7 Mystery Whales, Strangeness in Scotland, On collecting a cryptid, Bodmin Leopard Skull, Shuker's Cryptozoological Bibliography pt 2.

8 Green Cats and Dogs, Mystery Whales, Quagga Project, Bibliography of Cryptozoological books (3rd & concluding part), Malayan Man Beast.

9 Hong Kong Tiger, Horseman of Lincolnshire, Scottish BHM, Congo Peacock, Mystery Whales.

10 Mystery Moth of Madagascar, Bengal Leopard Cats, The Derry, Wild Boars in Kent, a new Irish lake monster, mystery whales and the truth about the Essex Beach Corpses.

11 The "Walrus Special", also: Feathered Dinosaurs, Ground Sloth Survival in North America, Mystery Whales, Initial Bipedalism.

12 Lions: The Barbary Lion, etc. More Feathered Dinosaurs, Chinese Crabs in the Thames, Mystery Animals of Germany, News from New Zealand.

13 Pangolins; also Moby the Sperm Whale, Barking Beast of Bath, Yorkshire ABCs, Molly the Singing Oyster, Leatherback Turtles, Walruses.

14 The Dragons of Yorkshire, Irish mystery animals, In Search Of "Gambo", Charlie Fort and the Vampire Sheep Slayer - and Jackals; and the first of Clinton's Cogitations (Clin Keeling looks back on and comments on the previous issue).

15 Lake Dakataua "Migo" monster update, The Weird Warbling Whatsit of the Westcountry, The Beast of Llangurig, The Waspman, The Bigfoot "Murders", and three articles on Beavers.

16 Expedition Report: The Search for the Chupacabra; Quagga Project update; Bestiary #1; Snakes with Legs, Eastern Cougars; Giant Lizards in the English Countryside?

17 British Wolverine - or muddy badger?, Turtle Tales, Killer Bees, The Ziphiidae - possible new species, Vertebrate palaeontology, Video: the Beast of Bodmin press conference.

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Wolves may no longer live at Wolf's Castle Crag in Pembrokeshire, Wales, but at least one man believes that the fields and woods below the hill are home to an equally fearsome animal, the Wolverine.

Waitoreke: The Enigma from New Zealand - by Craig Heinselman

Reports of a mammal living in the mountain lakes and rivers of New Zealand has been reported over the years, with varying descriptions from otter-like, beaver-like and seal-like. Craig looks at the etymology of the name of this animal, the diversities of life on and around New Zealand, its habitat, the theories (through behavior, anatomy and habitat) and the evidence thus far.

Folk tales involving were-beasts from Ghana - by Louis Baba

Pelorus Jack - by James Cowan (1911)

The text of the 1911 booklet by James Cowan on "Pelorus Jack", the solitary white dolphin which met coastal steamers plying between the two main islands of New Zealand.

Chance would be a Fine Thing - by Graham Inglis

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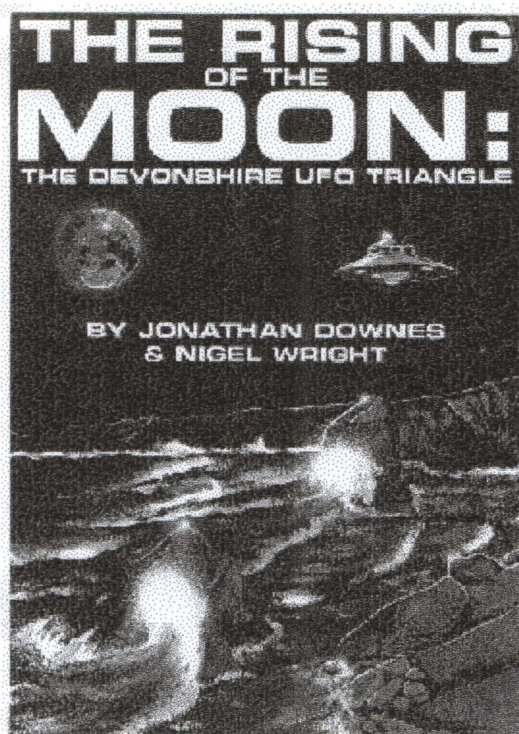
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